

SPECIAL 19TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
ISRAEL AFTER RABIN

November 27-December 10, 1995

IN THESE TIMES

THE LORD'S WORK

Will the
Christian
Coalition
make
America
safe for
theocracy?

By Robert Parry

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Pat Robertson
and Ralph Reed

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EDITORIAL

THE SPYING GAME

With the Cold War out of the way and Republicans and Democrats obsessed with balancing the budget, why are they still spending \$28 billion a year on the nation's intelligence agencies? Even assuming that the American people believed massive spying was required in the bad old days when we faced a seemingly powerful enemy, what could possibly justify this expense now?

The answer, Bill Clinton tells us, is that in order to stay competitive the United States must spy on other nations' industries. As Secretary of State Warren Christopher says, commercial relations are now at "the very top of our foreign policy agenda." And the CIA, as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy, is needed to help American corporations dominate world trade. That's why, two years ago, Clinton ordered the agency to focus on economic espionage. Their mission: support trade negotiations; uncover the tactics used by foreign companies to win contracts with our important trading partners; and spot financial troubles that can lead to embarrassing crises.

Two questions spring to mind in light of Clinton's directive, one of principle, the other of competence. Clinton finessed both, but the commercial media, and mostly unnamed government officials, naturally ignored the principle and focused on the CIA's ability to perform the assigned task.

One "senior" official told the *New York Times* that the CIA might be able to provide very specific pieces of information gathered electronically, but "the minute that you

***Washington
promotes CIA
insanity even
without the
cover of the
Cold War.***

rely on their political or economic assessments—well, let me be delicate, their capabilities are limited." Another official seconded this judgment: "The important stuff is garbled. And most of what you get is garbage." And, editorially, the *Times* reminded its readers that during the Cold War the CIA "considered the Soviet Union an economic power when it was actually an economic wreck." There is lit-

tle evidence of any improvement in the agency's expertise since then, they added.

This raises a related issue, one that hit the headlines only a week after the *Times*' comments. Two new CIA reports revealed that the agency had knowingly passed misleading information to three presidents—Reagan, Bush and Clinton—in the late '80s and early '90s. Obtained from Soviet double agents, and placed with the help of confessed spy Aldrich Ames, this misinformation grossly exaggerated Soviet military and economic prowess and buttressed decisions to spend bil-

lions of dollars on unnecessary arms, including items such as the multibillion-dollar F-22 stealth fighter and the Navy's Seawolf submarine.

Why would the CIA purposely pass on such misinformation? Some former officials claim they did so because they thought it was correct, even though they knew, or strongly suspected, that it came from double agents. But the more believable reason is that they were trying to please Reagan, Bush and Clinton. After all, it's hard to sell Congress and the public on massive military spending without concocting a dangerous enemy—or, at least, so it used to seem. All three presidents have wanted to look tough—and placate powerful weapons manufacturers—while priming the industrial pump in a way that minimizes social spending.

Of course, reporters and commentators in the commercial media adroitly avoided this question, just as they have declined to discuss whether or not the government of the United States should collect intelligence in the service of private corporations. If questioned on this, Clinton would undoubtedly tell the public that this form of corporate subsidy—like all the others—is needed to provide jobs for the American people. But one of the tasks the CIA has done in pursuance of Clinton's directive has been to spy on Japanese automakers on behalf of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, companies that have cut their workforces in half during the last decade, allegedly to become more competitive with the Japanese. And another has been to monitor Mexico's financial health in order to facilitate NAFTA, a treaty that has already cost tens of thousands of American jobs, and that will end up costing many more.

The business of America should not be the slavish promotion of business, and especially not the subsidy of socially irresponsible business intent only on enhancing the bottom line. President Calvin Coolidge promoted that idea in the '20s, with disastrous results. And President Reagan embraced the idea in the '80s, only to be copied by both Bush and Clinton—also with disastrous results for an ever-growing portion of the American population. The CIA should not violate international law by spying on business activities in other countries. Instead, it should contribute to the balancing of the federal budget by having its spending cut to a figure commensurate with its contribution to our well-being. In other words, it should be eliminated. ◀

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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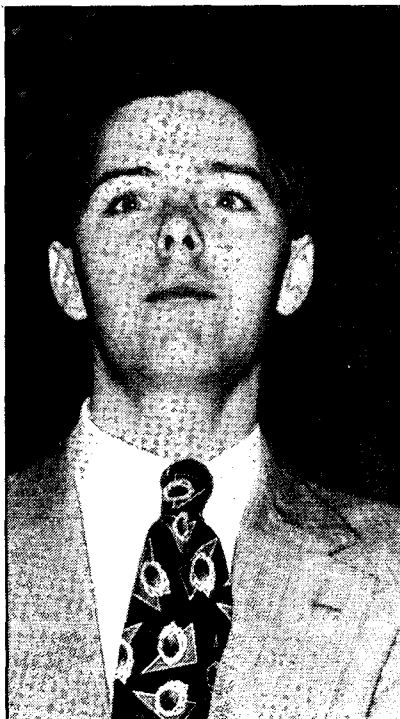
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InTHESE TIMES

CONTENTS

Volume 20, Number 1



COVER PHOTO © 1995 JENNIFER WARBURG ROBERTSON AND RICK REINHARD (REED) / IMPACT VISUALS

Law and disorder
*Counting the costs of the
 GOP's cuts to Legal Aid*
 NINA SCHUYLER
 21

The Lord's work

*The Christian right has risen, but
 progressives are launching
 crusades of their own*

ROBERT PARRY

14

Israel after Rabin

*The subculture of violence that
 spawned the assassination
 threatens to grow unchecked*

BENNY MORRIS

27



FEATURES

- First Stone: Voting right, left and center • Joel Bleifuss12
 The fall of black America's political capital • Salim Muwakkil19
 Labor's nursing-home base • David Moberg24

REVIEWS

- In Print: *Coming of Age* • Robert Westbrook30
Russia/USSR/Russia • James Weinstein32
The Gaza Strip • Joseph Levine36
 Speed Reading • Scott Sherman38

DEPARTMENTS

- Letters4
 Sylvia • Nicole Hollander4
 In Short6
 Appall-O-Meter • David Futrelle7
 Media Watch • Jennifer Gonnerman9
 Tomorrow's news • Steve Brodner9
 Huge Mouth • Peter Hannan11
 Classifieds39

LETTERS

Hacking it up

I was appalled to see Mike Males coughing up tobacco industry PR on these pages ("Smoke and mirrors," October 16). In decrying President Clinton's "failure to address adult smoking," Males ignores the addictive nature of nicotine. Virtually all new smokers start before their 18th birthday; their average age is about 14. One million U.S. teens will be hooked as new tobacco industry customers this year, and half of them will eventually die from tobacco-related illnesses.

The real breakthrough of Clinton's proposal—and the part most likely to be gutted by a Congress bent on deregulation—is its willingness to go after the *appeal* of tobacco to youth. The parental influence that Males blames for youth smoking is, like peer pressure, a red herring brought to us by Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco—intended to obscure and deny the profound social and cultural effects of \$6 billion per year in tobacco advertising and promotion. With foes so rich and

powerful, why make enemies of 50 million adult smokers?

We look to ITT for hard-hitting coverage of big business, so conspicuously absent from the mainstream media. Transnational tobacco giants can more than afford to defend themselves.

Kathy Mulvey
Research Director, INFACT
Boston

Mike Males replies: No, parental smoking is not a "red herring." The Environmental Protection Agency, in a report tobacco giants tried to derail, found that parents' smoke caused up to 1.3 million respiratory illnesses every year in children. My study of 400 Los Angeles middle school students, published in the August Journal of School Health, found that children of smoking parents were four times more likely than children of nonsmokers to light up by age 12 and three times more likely to smoke by age 15—exactly the youthful pattern Mulvey deplors.

Teens smoke because of the widespread acceptance of smoking by

adults. That acceptance is reflected in 50 million adult smokers; in the cheap price of cigarettes; in media that profit from tobacco ads that reinforce smoking as mature; in a president who endorses the industry line that adult smoking is "a reasonable decision"; in lawmakers who subsidize tobacco growers and thrive on tobacco dollars; in health groups that condone parents' smoking even when it harms children; and in an administration policy that shrinks from tough issues like raising tobacco taxes, but insists that berating teens and fiddling with ad colors and motifs constitute a real policy.

Credit where it's due

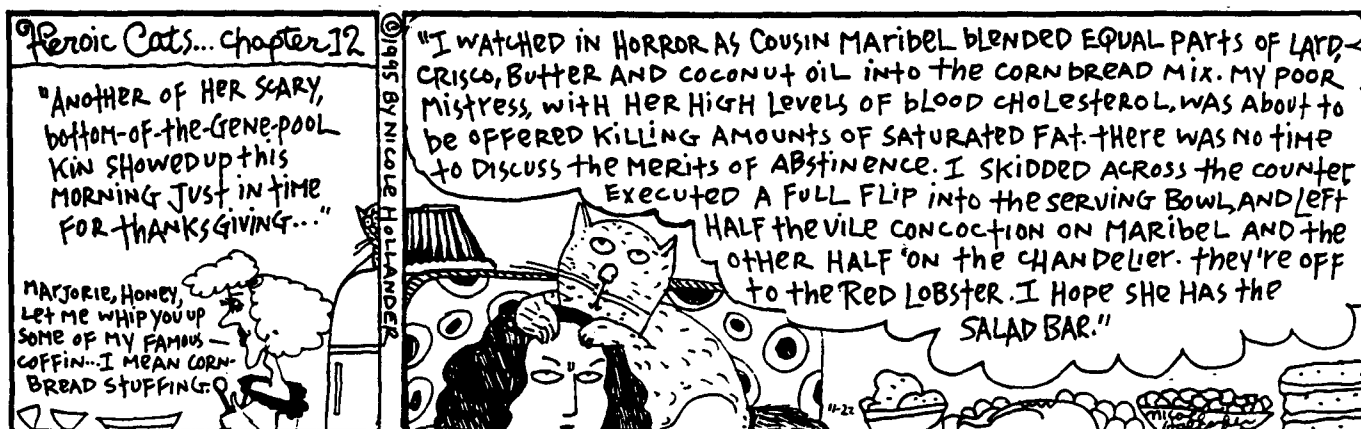
David Moberg's article on the Organizing Institute ("Getting organized," October 30) was informative, in part, because it used the real-life experiences of organizing interns. Unfortunately, Moberg failed to note that the interns were working in an organizing effort entirely funded and directed by the Wisconsin Laborers' District Council.

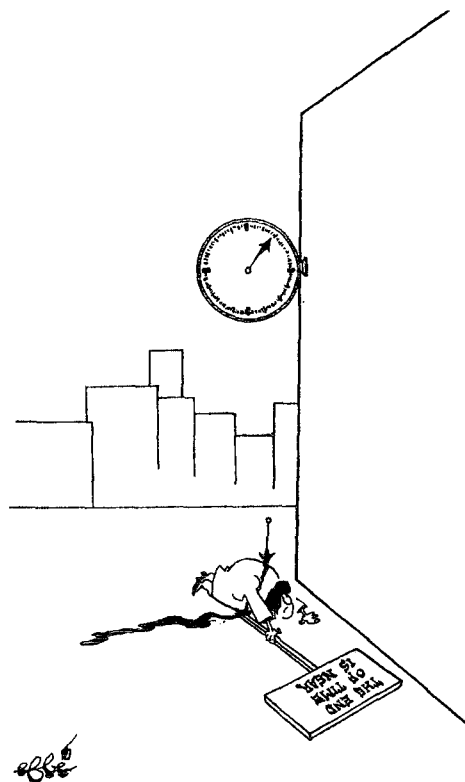
Moberg describes David Kieffer as a former ACTION organizer, a job he held a few years ago, instead of noting his current employment. Surely David Kieffer, our council organizer, Scott Lautenschlager and the organizing interns must have told Moberg of their affiliation with the Laborers.

The article also failed to mention our unique effort to organize the entire
Continued on page 41

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander





History has not ended.

Nor has the nuclear dilemma. Chaos and terrorism, treaties and technology. What do they add up to in 1995?

It will not end in December.

Thursday, December 7, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.: The first-ever public hearing on *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists'* famous "Doomsday Clock."

International experts and common folk will comment on the state of the world.

But it will be made.

Friday, December 8, noon: At a public assembly and press conference, the Doomsday Clock will be set.

Be there.

Palevsky Theater, University of Chicago

For more information contact: Kathleen Weis, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*
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Charges for lunch only, December 7.

NEW FROM SOUTH END PRESS

Dying from Dioxin

A Citizen's Guide to Reclaiming Our Health and Rebuilding Democracy

**By Lois Marie Gibbs
and the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste**

Recently released studies from the EPA show that widespread exposure to dioxin is destroying the health of the American people. Lois Marie Gibbs, the leader of the Love Canal relocation fight and the "mother" of the toxics movement, joins the CCHW to describe the alarming details of this public health crisis and explain how citizens can organize against this toxic threat.

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InSHORT



statements denying the rumors. On November 7 in the Mexican Congress, military officials reaffirmed their loyalty to the civilian government.

By giving ink to "confused rumors" of a nonexistent military coup, American papers may have been playing Chicken Little. After all, there has not been an attempted military coup in Mexico for more than 50 years. But

one well-informed opposition leader claims the rumors were not so far-fetched and says that military rumblings—especially in Chiapas—could have been a trial balloon for a future coup attempt. Whatever the truth of the rumors, however, the reports clearly speak to fundamental weaknesses that could make the Zedillo administration vul-

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THE RUMOR THAT ROARED

Earlier this month Mexico was shaken by reports of violence on the scale of 1994's Zapatista uprising. Only this time, the reports turned out to be untrue ... or at least premature.

On November 3 the AP-Dow Jones and Reuters wire services reported

"confused rumors that the Mexican Army was planning to assume control of the government" and "had initiated an offensive against the rebels in the southern state of Chiapas." Within hours, the Mexican army, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, the U.S. Embassy and the White House issued

nerable to attack.

The president himself is the flash-point for much of the country's instability. No one's first choice for president, Zedillo entered the 1994 race only after the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the initial candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). And since taking office, Zedillo has been unable to assuage public distrust of the PRI, which has held power

An American casualty in Chiapas

WITH REPORTERS FIXATING ON EVERY FLUCTUATION IN the peso, a brutal attack on the U.S. representative of the Zapatistas has gone virtually unnoticed.

On October 26, Cecilia Rodriguez was traveling outside of San Cristóbal de las Casas when she and a male friend were surrounded by four men armed with rifles. While one of the men guarded Rodriguez's companion—leaving him unharmed—Rodriguez was gang-raped by the others. After the assault, one of Rodriguez's assailants shouted, "You already know how things are in Chiapas, right? Shut up, then. ... Or you know what will happen to you."

Rodriguez, profiled in the August 8, 1994 issue of *In*

These Times, has been working in Chiapas since January 1994 to provide assistance to grass-roots groups seeking democratic reforms in Mexico. She was in Chiapas for the latest round of peace talks between the Zapatista rebels and the government.

Rodriguez lodged a complaint with the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, which in turn filed reports with the Mexican police. But the embassy official with whom she spoke explained that "they never prosecute here in Mexico." Rodriguez says she hopes "my experience will illustrate the brutal nature of the war being waged in Chiapas." Meanwhile, she insists that the attack won't deter her work. —Ashley Craddock

APPALL-O-METER

THE IN THESE TIMES INDEX OF INDECENCIES



Little smokers 7.2

A recent study suggests that the venerable *Weekly Reader*—read by generations of captive grade schoolers—may have helped to inspire some youngsters to become pack-a-day smokers. The *Weekly Reader*, whose corporate owner was at one time the largest shareholder in the

tobacco company RJR Nabisco, first came under fire in October 1994 after running an article on "smokers' rights" that conveniently neglected to mention the health dangers posed by cigarettes. Now a study suggests the article was no fluke. From 1989 to 1994, explained University of California researchers at the American Public Health Association's recent annual meeting, the *Weekly Reader* ran 34 articles dealing with smoking. Two-thirds of the articles presented industry views; only a little more than one-third warned of the dangers of tobacco. (In *Scholastic News*, a competing newsletter, researchers found that four out of five smoking-related articles carried warnings.)

Hugging=death 5.3

It might make physics classes a little difficult, but school officials at Matricola Middle School in Merrimack, N.H., have forbidden their students from touching one another. Though school principal Thomas Levesque says that the ban is a safety

measure, the Associated Press reports that some parents are afraid it may reflect the overzealous enforcement of a new school district rule that prohibits schools from "encouraging or supporting homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative." Teachers have apparently been especially harsh on girls hugging girls. One eighth-grader told the Associated Press that she had been warned about her behavior after hugging a friend. "I was having a problem that day in school, and my friend went to hug me," she said. "The teacher said, 'Don't do that. You know the rules.' [But] we're just friends. We're not promoting homosexuality."

Freudian slip-up 6.4

It's a case that reminds us all once again of the profound prescience of Sigmund Freud. As London's *Daily Telegraph* recently reported, a "mix-up" at Vienna's General Hospital led (as a hospital spokesman delicately put it) to "a testicle removal" being "carried out on a patient who was, in fact, due to undergo a circumcision." Hospital staff apparently confused the castrato with a different patient with cancerous testicles and a similar name.

Almost 12,000 businesses have closed over the last year, unemployment hovers between 20 and 30 percent, and since the December 1994 devaluation of the peso, wages have fallen by about one-third. A recent study by Mexico's National Nutrition Institute found that in the last 20 years there has been a 600 percent increase in infant malnutrition in Mexico City's metropolitan area. And one study indicates that two-thirds of the farmers, peasants and day laborers in the Mexican countryside earn less than \$3 a day.

Meanwhile, a broadening right-wing movement led by the Organization of Parents of Families, the Right to Life Movement and conservatives within the Roman Catholic Church is gathering momentum throughout the country. In Chiapas, the rebellion led by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation has sparked a fierce right-wing backlash. Local landlords have armed "white guards," private forces employed to strongarm workers and quell political dissidents.

Foreign investors have grown increasingly alarmed at the continuing unrest. After the peso crashed, investors pulled billions of dollars out of the Mexican economy, precipitating the country's greatest crisis since the Great Depression. And reported rumors of a coup further devalued the new peso, which quickly fell to its lowest level since devaluation—7.7 new pesos to the dollar.

James R. Jones, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico, has called the coup rumors "so bizarre and so definably untrue." Jones told the *New York Times* that the embassy had launched an informal investigation to determine the source of the rumors. But while the rumors may have been false, the specter of a burgeoning right-wing movement is real. As PRD congressman Adolfo Aguilar Zinser says, although the military may have publicly professed its loyalty, "there are those who want to create in this country the climate for a coup d'état."

—Dan LaBotz

since 1929. Long synonymous with corruption, the party has come under increasing suspicion over the past two years, a period in which three prominent Mexican leaders—Colosio, PRI leader José Ruiz Francisco Massieu and Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo—were assassinated.

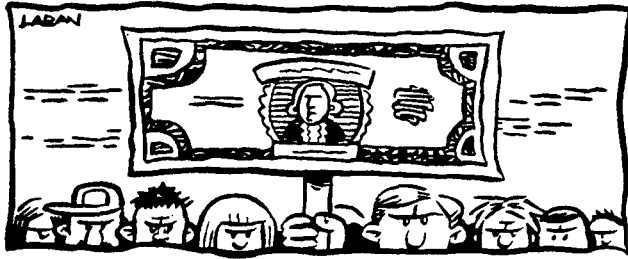
Even within the PRI, Zedillo has failed to provide cohesion. PRI congressmen have been jumping ship for the conservative National Action

Party, which registered impressive gains in six statewide elections this month. And last month Manuel Camacho Solís, a one-time mayor of Mexico City and former head of the PRI, left the party, promising to lead a new opposition movement. A few days later another PRI leader, Demetrio Sodi de la Tijera, said he would leave the PRI to found a new center-left party.

But the country's problems extend far beyond the failings of just one man.



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LIVING LARGE

With efforts to raise the federally mandated minimum wage on the back burner, local organizers across the nation have initiated campaigns to ensure that taxpayer-subsidized companies give their workers a living wage. Although recent initiatives in St. Paul, Minn., and Milwaukee failed to garner the hoped-for results, organizers in both cities believe they made important gains in the push to find progressive economic strategies.

"We were able to define the issues, not just react to the right," said Mary Jo Maynes, a leader of the St. Paul New Party, which supported the city's failed jobs and living wages ballot measure. "It was good to play offense for a change."

In Milwaukee, activists won a partial victory on November 6 when the City Council passed a higher minimum wage for businesses with city

contracts. But while the Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee proposed that firms benefiting from city contracts offer workers a minimum of \$7.70 an hour plus health

benefits, the City Council voted 9-8 to lop off the medical benefits provision, then reduced the minimum-wage requirement to \$6.05 an hour.

The following day, St. Paul voters rejected a similar ordinance that would have required St. Paul businesses that receive city subsidies above \$25,000 a year to pay workers at least a poverty-level wage (about \$7.21 an hour). Subsidized businesses would also have been required to try to fill employment openings through designated community hiring halls and to demonstrate a net increase in jobs over a two-year period. The measure failed by a 59 to 41 percent vote.

Organized by the Twin Cities Area New Party and Minnesota ACORN, the St. Paul drive marked one of the few attempts by progressives to co-opt a staple strategy of right-wing politics: ballot initiatives. In taking their case directly to the voters, organizers found that their core ideas—reforming "cor-

porate welfare" and reversing the decline in national living standards—appealed across class and race lines.

Two recent reports about local economic conditions also bolstered organizers' claims. In September, the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* reported that more than \$15 million in city business subsidies had been "misplaced, misspent or misused." In October, the local Jobs Now Coalition released a 10-year study showing the continued spread of low-wage employment and poverty in the Twin Cities.

But in the end, the St. Paul coalition was outgunned and outspent. The business-dominated opposition was led by St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman and his aide, Eric Mische, who took a leave of absence to work with a Chamber of Commerce-funded PR firm on the "no" side. The mayor and his corporate allies raised the fear level by calling the initiative "economic terrorism" and "Stalinesque." For his part, Mische warned about outside agitators, "extreme, radical people who will do anything to get this passed." Minnesota Mutual and the Northern States Power Co. pitched in thousands of dollars to defeat the proposal. Corporations bankrolled glossy literature labeling the ordinance a "job killer." While the living-wage campaign relied largely on volunteers, the "no" campaign—which laid out \$10 for every \$1 spent in support of the proposed ordinance—paid people to phone voters and go door to door spreading their message.

Despite the disappointing results, both campaigns forced opponents to acknowledge the need for corporate accountability, and focused attention on the spread of sub-poverty employment. And with similar campaigns under way in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and other cities, living-wage supporters believe they have changed the terms of debate about economic policy. "We want to establish some standards for the private use of public dollars," says St. Paul campaign organizer Cara Letofsky, "not merely close our eyes and hope for the best."

Liars, damn liars and David McIntosh

REP. DAVID MCINTOSH (R-IN), FAMOUS FOR INVENTING ABSURD STORIES

about "burdensome" federal regulations, has taken up forging documents. His latest fabrication was discovered this September as a House subcommittee held hearings on McIntosh-sponsored legislation that would bar nonprofit groups that receive federal grants from lobbying the federal government. As Nan Aron, president of the legal watchdog group Alliance for Justice, prepared to testify, McIntosh staffers distributed a fact sheet forged on alliance letterhead that purported to list the amount of federal grants received by the group and seven of its member organizations. For his part, House Speaker Newt Gingrich tabled a motion calling on the House to reprimand McIntosh. The House Ethics Committee, however, might still investigate.

—Joel Bleifuss



—Joe Peschek

MEDIA WATCH

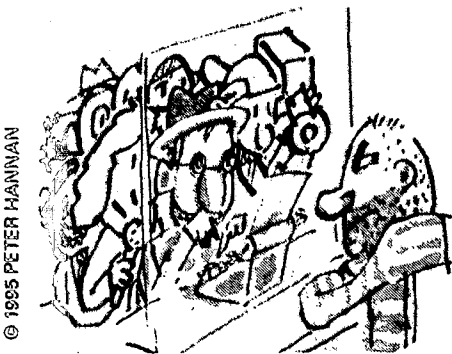
BY JENNIFER GONNERMAN

Low Post

Twelve days before the Million Man March, the *Washington Post* circulated an internal memo. "Members of the newsroom staff should not participate," the memo read. Still reeling from a recent *New Republic* attack on its affirmative action program, the *Post* was careful to point out that the notice reiterated a longstanding policy prohibiting involvement in "partisan" events. For many staffers this brought back memories of the *Post*'s 1989 refusal to allow reporters to join a historic abortion-rights march. *Post* spokesperson Virginia Rodriguez explains: "We ask our reporters not to participate because we don't feel people can be objective if they are out demonstrating for one particular cause."

Doing Times

The '80s saw the birth of the AIDS beat, with some major newspapers—including the *New York Times*—assigning a reporter to cover the disease. Halfway into the '90s, a



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brand-new beat is emerging to report on a new epidemic: the booming prison population. During a recent



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14-day stretch, the *New York Times* published no less than nine features about life behind bars. One offered a fascinating look at an Alabama prison populated by septuagenarians. Last month, the *Times*' prison obsession even spilled over into the business section, where a story appeared about Prison Blues, an Oregon company that sells denim jeans and other

clothing made by inmates. The company's slogan: "Made on the inside, to be worn on the outside."

Lifer magazine

The media's new jail-house obsession has been especially good news for *Prison Life*, the nation's only glossy magazine devoted to the subject and written partly by

prisoners. Phil Donahue and Gordon Elliott are among the television talk-show hosts who have invited *Prison Life* staffers to appear as guests on their shows. Inmates buy 50 percent of the magazine's subscriptions, and *Prison Life* has a name for its growing readership on the outside: the "voyeur market."

TOMORROW'S NEWS TONIGHT

By Steve Brodner

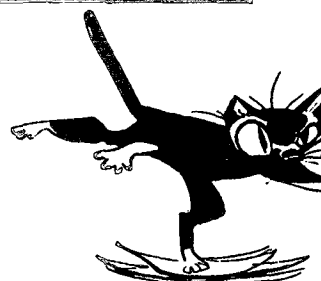


Ditches Chelsea
in Serb-held
territory

Clinton
Renounces
Everything



Gives saxophone
to Libyan mission
as planter



Stuffs Socks,
gives him
to RNC as
paperweight

BRODNER

LABOR'S COLA WAR

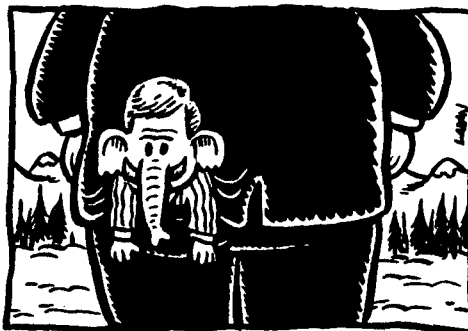
The AFL-CIO's newly elected leaders have hit the ground running. In his first week, President John Sweeney appointed a half-dozen of the labor movement's top strategists to beef up support for embattled workers in prolonged labor disputes. The first two targets are the two-and-a-half-year lockout of 760 workers at the Decatur, Ill., plant of A.E. Staley, and the four-month strike of employees at the *Detroit News* and *Free Press*.

Joseph Uehlein, of the federation's Industrial Union Department, is heading up the task force. He predicts these campaigns will be just the first step in developing a permanent AFL-CIO support brigade for high-profile conflicts.

Staley workers and staff from their Paperworkers union headquarters have been pressuring PepsiCo not to renew its corn syrup contract with Staley when it expires at the end of this year. PepsiCo buys 30 percent of Staley's corn syrup, the company's main product. Earlier, Staley workers had persuaded the Miller Brewing Co. to drop its contract with Staley, and a similar victory with PepsiCo could have a dramatic impact.

Members of the Decatur local began escalating their protests around Labor Day. Union supporters chained themselves to Staley's gates for 12 hours at a time (to symbolize opposition to the 12-hour work days Staley has demanded), and a delegation traveled to London, where they chained themselves to the headquarters of Staley's owner, Tate & Lyle (see "War Zone," July 24). And on September 1, union militant Dan Lane began a hunger strike. Lane received support from nearly 100 others in the community who were part of a "rolling fast," forgoing food for one to three days.

Last month, Lane delivered an emotional appeal to the AFL-CIO convention, and Decatur union officials—including leaders from the long strikes



at Caterpillar and Bridgestone/Firestone—met with federation Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. When Sweeney called Lane on November 4 to pledge his support, he called off the fast—on its 64th day.

"We felt we'd hit a plateau," Lane said. "Most people felt the fast would help escalate the fight and raise the level of awareness around the country. Although I was starving myself, people in the local were being starved out. It's been very devastating on families. That really was the message. We really need your help." (Supporters can call Pepsi at 1-800-433-2652 or write to CEO Wayne Callaway, PepsiCo Inc., Purchase, N.Y. 10577, to urge the company to cancel its Staley contract.)

Uehlein says the AFL-CIO is developing appropriate strategies for pressuring businesses not to advertise in the *News* or *Free Press*, such as having Carpenters union representatives visit home-products chains or United Food and Commercial Workers delegations go to grocery stores. The federation will also help launch an alternative strike newspaper to give advertisers another outlet during the holiday season and to give hard-pressed strikers a bit of picket-line cheer.

—David Moberg

Seeing green

CORPORATE PACS REPRESENTING industries that want to dismantle the nation's environmental laws contributed \$6.1 million to members of Congress in the first half of 1995.

According to *Capital Eye*, the newsletter of the Center for Responsive Politics, 81 percent of that money went to Republicans. And a study by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group found that senators who voted to support oil drilling in the 1.5 million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge have, since 1989, received four times as much money from oil and gas PACs than did those who opposed the environmental giveaway. Between 1989 and 1995, senators who voted to open up the refuge have received an average of \$77,000 from industry PACs. —J.B.

EAST TIMOR'S TREMORS

As the 20th anniversary of Indonesia's 1975 invasion of East Timor approaches, the island's liberation movement appears to be shifting from clandestine resistance to open confrontation. Over the past year, rioting has rocked major towns across East Timor.

The new stage of confrontation began last November when thousands of young East Timorese (emboldened by the presence of foreign journalists visiting their capital, Dili, for an Asia Pacific Economic Conference meeting) protested for independence. Protests escalated into attacks on the homes and businesses of immigrant Indonesians. According to Amnesty International, several protesters were killed and hundreds more arrested in ensuing clashes with police.

This September, thousands rose up in protest in the predominantly Catholic country after an Indonesian prison official made slurs about the church. Rioters attacked Indonesian homes and businesses, burning a major market in Dili.

Tensions reignited this October, when officials attempted to arrest a pro-independence activist hiding in a Catholic convent. When rioting broke

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out, troops opened fire and beat and arrested hundreds of rioters. According to Jakarta, the military killed only two protesters, a figure human rights observers dispute.

The Indonesian government ascribes the unrest to ethnic and religious animosity—and justifies the occupation as “peacekeeping.” But the occupation has claimed more than 200,000 East Timorese lives, a number that belies this characterization. “People here feel like slaves in their own homeland,” says Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, a finalist for this year’s Nobel Peace Prize.

Of the country’s 800,000 residents, an estimated 150,000 are Indonesian migrants. Indonesians dominate the economy and occupy most top governmental jobs. And there are more than 20,000 Indonesian troops stationed in East Timor. East Timorese animosity to the occupation has grown steadily for two decades. Even the handful of East Timorese elites who once favored integration with Indonesia have become disillusioned. “We don’t have a democratic system here,” complains businessman Manuel Carrascalao, a member of the local parliament. “[I]t’s rule by force, oppression and suffering.”

As casualties have stacked up, the international community has done little to pressure Jakarta to withdraw. Between 1984 and 1994, the World Bank provided Indonesia with more than \$1.5 billion a year in loans. And under the Clinton administration, the United States has mouthed pieties about human rights abuses while doling out \$275 million in economic aid and approving \$150 million in military sales.

“Although Washington is a bit slow in getting the message, there is growing pressure on Congress and the administration to end U.S. complicity,” says Charlie Scheiner, the national coordinator of the East Timor Action Network/U.S. “What happens during 1996, the 21st year of occupation, could tip the balance for East Timorese human and political rights.”

—Matthew Jardine

Easier to swallow

CAN THE STARBUCKS COFFEE COMPANY PROVE THAT BUSINESS ETHICS ISN’T an oxymoron? In a recently released code of conduct, Starbucks pledged to purchase coffee only from growers whose workers “have the right to freely associate

with whichever organizations ... they choose.” The historic code also states that “wage and benefit levels should

address the basic needs of workers and their families.” Starbucks will implement the new code in

Guatemala, which supplies the company with 70 percent of its coffee. Starbucks is the first

U.S. coffee company to agree that working conditions are among the criteria that will

be considered when selecting coffee. Starbucks Senior Vice President David Olson

said the company was “prodded” into developing a code as a result of a nation-

wide campaign by the Chicago-based

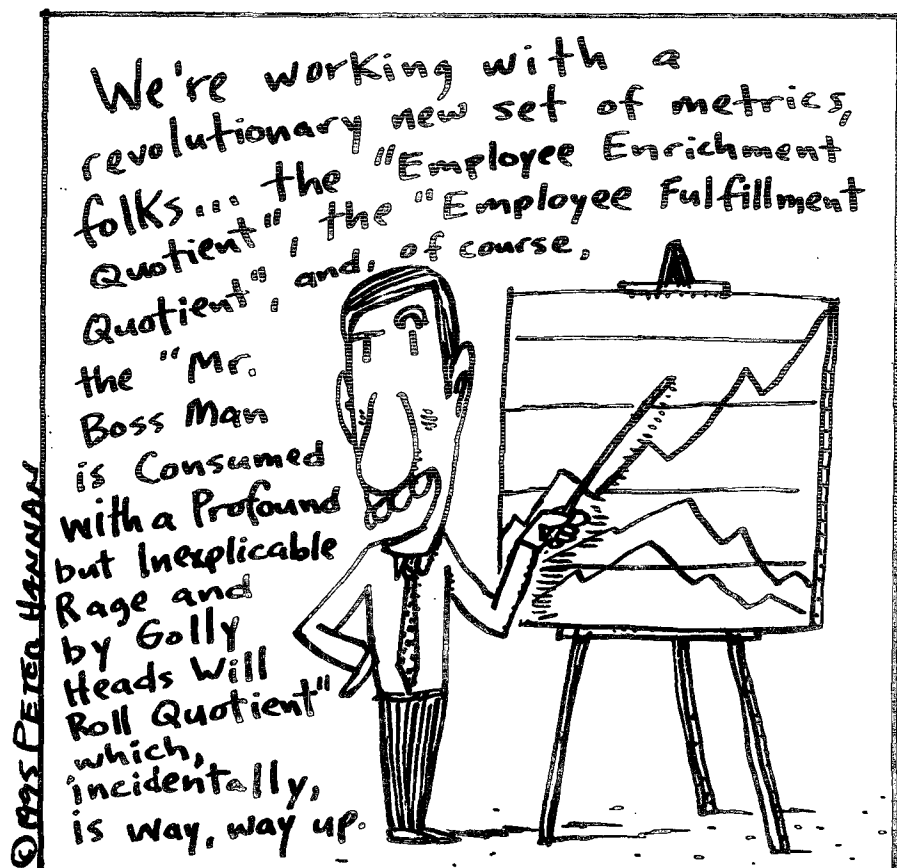
U.S./Guatemala Labor Education Project. The

group will now begin prodding other coffee companies to follow Starbucks’ example. —J.B.



THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

By Peter Hannan



T H E F I R S T S T O N E

Voting matters

By Joel Bleifuss

“Was it only a dream?” Martin Luther King Jr., were he alive, might well wonder. Today, King’s dream of a multiracial society seems more remote than ever. Black Muslims offer an insular nationalism. And hard-right Republicans manipulate white insecurities for electoral gain.

Earlier this month, however, a group of people from across the country gathered in Boston to champion a reform that they believe will help bridge the country’s racial divide—proportional representation (PR). Participants at the conference, which was sponsored by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Voting and Democracy, discussed strategies and heard from leading proponents of PR, such as former presidential candidate John Anderson, contrite conservative Michael Lind and, especially, Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA).

Last June the U.S. Supreme Court, infected with the anti-affirmative action bug, effectively stripped McKinney of her congressional seat. The court ruled that political boundaries could not be based predominantly on race, and consequently that the Georgia congressional district she represents is unconstitutional. At the same time the court has upheld all-white race-based districts, like Texas’ 6th District, which, as McKinney put it, “is 91 percent white and resembles splattered spaghetti sauce.”

On October 26, McKinney, a former political science professor, responded to the Supreme Court by unveiling legislation that would permit states to establish multimember congressional districts in which legislators would be elected through one of three different proportional representation voting systems. “What we have tried to do is to take some lemons that were handed to us by the Supreme Court and make some lemonade,” said McKinney. “By opening up the discussion about how we can get away from race-based dis-

tricting ... it moves us closer to the color-blind society we all would like to have. ... As more districts like mine are dismantled, we will need a new approach giving all Americans the opportunity to have a voice in our halls of power.”

Support for PR comes from both the left and the right. An active participant in the PR movement is Paul Jacob, the executive director of the right-leaning group U.S. Term Limits. Alvin Toffler, House Speaker Newt Gingrich’s futurist guru, also endorses PR. In *The Third Wave* he put it this way: “We need new approaches designed for a democracy of minorities—methods whose purpose is to reveal differences rather than to paper them over with forced or fake majorities based on exclusionary voting, sophistic framing of the issues, or rigged electoral procedures. We need, in short, to mod-

ernize the entire system so as to strengthen the role of diverse minorities.” Toffler argues that PR is “one quite conventional” way to do this.

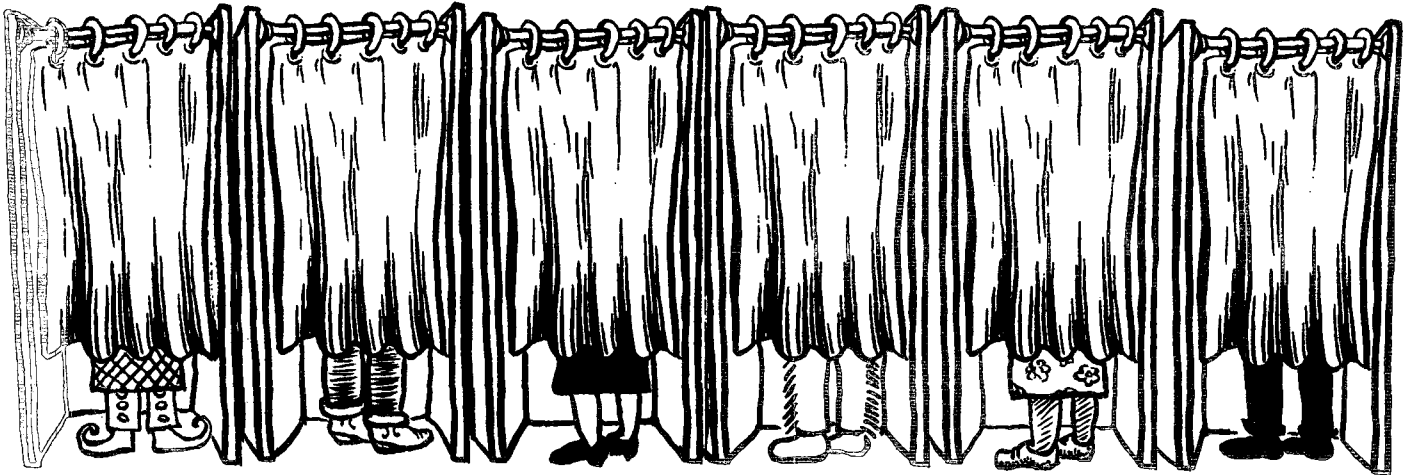
Ironically, multimember congressional districts were banned in 1967 by a Congress that feared Southern states would hold at-large congressional elections: a system that would have allowed a state’s white majority to control all contested seats and shut African-Americans out of the political process. But while racially gerrymandered single-member districts may have guaranteed a measure of minority representation, they also served to divide the electorate along racial lines. In addition, the single-member system divides the electorate into winners and losers. Birmingham civil rights attorney Edward Still puts it this way: “Surely, any majoritarian system that can leave 49 percent of the people ... with nothing to show for having gone to the polls except a patriotic feeling is not the answer.”

Under PR voting systems, in which candidates run in multimember districts, the vast majority of voters can be assured of casting a vote for a candidate who wins. To illustrate this point, the Center for Voting and Democracy has established a “representation index.” The index measures the percentage of Americans old enough to vote who helped elect a member of the House of Representatives. In 1994, the representation index in the United States was 22 percent, while in Germany, which elects some of its federal officials through proportional voting systems, the index stood at 75 percent.

Besides ensuring that minority viewpoints are represented in legislative bodies, PR is also likely to increase the percentage of women officeholders. For this reason the nonpartisan National Women’s Political Caucus supports McKinney’s attempt to legalize multimember congressional districts.

In the United States, women comprise only 11 percent of the House of Representatives. According to a U.N. report,

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the United States ranks 24th out of 54 Western democracies in terms of women's representation in national legislatures. The countries with the highest percentage are those that use PR exclusively. In Sweden 41 percent of national legislators are women; in Finland 39 percent are women; in Norway, 36 percent; in the Netherlands, 29 percent; and in South Africa, 24 percent. And research by Arend Lijphart, the president of the American Political Science Association and a renowned expert on comparative voting systems, indicates that countries with proportional representation have enacted more laws that benefit women and children.

PR offers other advantages as well. In close elections it eliminates the "swing factor," which permits a small percentage of voters—like NRA supporters—to decide which candidate wins and loses. And that tends to dilute the power of special-interest money. PR also eliminates the advantages incumbents give themselves through gerrymandered districts. In a sense, under PR the electorate chooses their representatives, rather than representatives choosing their voters through gerrymandering.

Bob Brischetto, formerly of the Southwest Voter Research Institute in San Antonio, notes that newly implemented proportional voting in Texas school board races increased the number of Latino board members. In a University of Texas at San Antonio-sponsored report on those 1995 elections, Brischetto concluded: "If any numerical minority—racial, gender, country club crowd, bubbas, the militia—meets the magic threshold and votes as a bloc, they can elect a candidate of their choice. Perhaps this last point is why the system is so controversial."

McKinney realizes what she's up against. President Clinton has derided Lani Guinier's sophisticated writings on PR voting systems as "anti-democratic." And Bob Dole has condemned PR as "vote-rigging schemes that make quotas look mild." As McKinney has observed, "The political establishment in Washington has a difficult time with proportional voting because it requires that they earn their power, not inherit it."

And the Republican National Committee (RNC) knows a threat to its power when it sees one. Last May, in a Mary-

land voting-rights case in which a judge imposed a PR system known as cumulative voting, the RNC submitted a friend of the court brief that stated: "As the voice of the Republican Party of the United States, the RNC expressly rejects any electoral system that undermines the role of the major political parties. Cumulative voting is one such system and, as such, should be rejected in this and all other cases."

As was the case when the civil rights movement emerged in the '50s, the mainstream press has been slow to acknowledge PR, much less lend support. Neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* saw fit to print any notice that McKinney had introduced legislation that could change the way Congress is elected.

The voting-rights community, which has fought long and hard to increase minority representation in Congress, is also loath to give up the current system. "There are still leaders in the voting-rights community who want to keep fighting to preserve the districts, and then, if they lose everything go to PR," explains Rob Richie, the executive director of the Center for Voting and Democracy. Some elected African-American leaders are also wary of PR, since a change in the voting system would mean that many black elected officials could for the first time face real opposition. Yet McKinney's proposed legislation is drawing increasing support from fellow members of the Congressional Black Caucus, such as Reps. James Clyburn (D-SC), Chaka Fattah (D-PA) and Melvin Watt (D-NC), who have signed on as co-sponsors.

Richie, who founded the Center for Voting and Democracy four years ago, believes a movement for PR is now taking shape. PR, says Richie, is approaching a "threshold of viability where people realize that this is not a crazy idea. Just in the last year, we have made inroads in Congress, in cities, and in more and more public-interest organizations. If we can get PR adopted in the next few years for city elections, and then perhaps in states, we will be ready for the next congressional redistricting in 2000 and 2001. Then we will hit away at gerrymandering. It is particularly vulnerable now, in that gerrymanders are getting worse and worse. It is a long haul, but we are starting to see things happening."

POLITICS

The Lord's work

The Christian right has risen, but progressive groups are launching crusades of their own.

By Robert Parry

These are the glory days for the Christian right. When 4,000 members of Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition convened in Washington this September, Republican presidential contenders lined up to seek the coalition's blessing. This month, soon after Christian right luminaries threw a tantrum about Colin Powell because he didn't accept their entire social agenda, he dropped out of the race.

No longer is the Christian right a furtive movement that mounts stealth campaigns to capture control of school boards in isolated communities. It has become a national powerhouse whose spokesmen share their insights on network talk shows with respectful pundits. And next

year could be better. The Christian right hopes to put a friendly Republican in the White House, complementing solid conservative majorities in the House and Senate.

But there is also some gloom among religious conservatives. Their "family values" agenda has been blamed for the Republican setbacks in this month's off-year elections and for drops in the GOP's public approval ratings nationwide. Grass-roots organizers who have battled the Christian right, even in conservative Southern states, are beginning to sense a shift in public mood, a feeling that the Christian right may have gone too far.

"There's a time for everything in politics," says Cecile Richards, the executive director of the fledgling Texas Freedom Alliance and the daughter of former Texas Gov. Ann Richards. "This just seems to be a time when people have said 'enough.'" Suddenly, Richards' little group, founded only last February and with just two organizers, is being flooded with phone calls from citizens wanting to fight the Christian right. Hundreds began showing up at conferences in Houston, Austin and San

Antonio. In particular, Richards found mainstream clergy concerned about how the right's policies hurt the poor. "I think there's a growing sense of responsibility among the clergy to debunk this movement," says the 38-year-old Richards in a fast-paced Texas twang.

Richards believes that the Christian right succeeded initially, in part, by pushing a few hot-button issues, such as abortion and gay rights, that did not affect the broad majority of voters. But then, she argues, the fundamentalists began espousing positions on a wider range of issues, such as taxes, legal services for the poor and, most explosively, public schools. "They crept into everyone's life," Richards says. "They started to get into everybody's face."

This month's election results knocked the Christian right back a few feet. The national Republican Party had looked to Virginia to demonstrate a long-term political realignment in the South. The GOP hoped to capture both branches of the state legislature for the first time since Reconstruction. But when the votes were tallied, the Republicans had a majority in neither. More disturbing for the national GOP, Republican-backed candidates lost badly in northern Virginia swing districts, such as Fairfax County.

Local Republicans in Fairfax were battered after the *Washington Post* printed a story revealing that some GOP-backed candidates in the school board race favored the Christian right's teaching of "creationism" in science classes.

"It appears the entire Republican slate of school board members was a difficult thing to overcome, with the connotation of conservative positions in a moderate county," complains Gary Jones, a moderate Republi-

This story was made possible by a grant from the Funding Exchange, which is financing a series of articles about conservative grass-roots politics.



Ralph Reed at the Christian Coalition's recent "Road to Victory" conference.

Democratic opponent, Katherine Hanley, exulted that Fairfax voters "have chosen the mainstream, not the extreme." The backlash against the Christian right seemed to energize Virginia's Democratic activists, much as Oliver North's Senate candidacy had done in 1994, when the state bucked the national Republican trend. Across the sprawling suburbs of Fairfax, the controversy over injecting Christian fundamentalism into the school curriculum enlivened normally dull "back-to-school" nights, with leaders of the PTA and some school administrators speaking out about the potential disruption to learning.

"They want to come in with their religious views and impose it on others," charged Fairfax PTA president Kenton Pattie. "It does kids no good to say, on the one hand, we want to raise academic standards and, on the other hand, teach religious ideas." Fairfax Republicans were thrown off stride by the religious conservatives. Moderate Republicans such as Jones tried to distance themselves from creationism altogether. "I think it's an important issue for the family," Jones delicately explained before the election as he campaigned outside a Giant supermarket on a sparkling fall day. But then he stiffened and added quietly, "I think it need not be in the curriculum of the schools." Jones also cautiously volunteered that he favored bilingual education and supported the federal government's "Goals 2000" reform of the nation's school curricu-

can who lost his race to chair the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. On election night, Jones'

ula, two more *bêtes noires* of the Christian right.

Though progressive groups that monitor the Christian right were heartened by the recent elections, they still believe religious conservatives can propel the Republicans to victory in the 1996 elections, helping the GOP sweep the White House, the Senate and the House of Representatives. "In the past 40 years, there has always been something in Washington, some institution in position to stop that kind of radical [right-wing] policy," observes Matthew Freeman, the 35-year-old director of research at People For the American Way, a liberal group combating the religious right. But if the Republicans win again in 1996, "the courts are gone, the White House is gone, and both houses of Congress are gone. That could be the end of the dance. They could enact all of their public policies."

With money, savvy national leadership and old-fashioned grass-roots organizing, the Christian right has established itself as a dominant political force across huge swaths of the nation—from the old Democratic South, through the Rocky Mountain states and into some traditionally moderate states, such as Minnesota and Iowa. Robertson's Christian Coalition credibly claims to dominate the Republican Party in 18 states, while wielding substantial influence in about a dozen others. With a lobbying outpost on Capitol Hill in addition to its Chesapeake, Va., headquarters, the Christian Coalition has come a long way from the days in 1991, when the coalition's executive director, Ralph Reed, said: "I want to be invisible. I do guerrilla warfare. I paint my face and travel at night. You don't know it's over until you're in a body bag. You don't know

until election night."

The Christian Coalition no longer sneaks its punches. It telegraphs them with warnings that it will "take out" wayward members of Congress who cast an "anti-Christian" vote. The coalition boasts 1.7 million "members and supporters" spread through all 50 states. It is also backed by powerful national media—ranging from cable television networks and talk radio to glossy magazines and computer bulletin boards—that refine and reinforce the religious right agenda.

The coalition declares that in 1996 it will aggressively push its "pro-family" battle against secular humanism, abortion, homosexual rights and other liberal demons. Besides volunteer muscle and organization, its principal weapon will be the distribution of more than 40 million "voter guides," which, according to critics, regularly distort the records of opposition candidates. In the past, for example, candidates who support the National Endowment for the Arts have been listed as favoring "tax-funded obscene art."

"Rarely has a grass-roots organization achieved so much in so little time," the Christian Coalition announced in a recent progress report. And indeed, it has much to brag about. It rose from the ashes of Robertson's 1988 GOP presidential run and the 1989 collapse of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority. Robertson entrusted the political direction of the coalition to the then-27-year-old Reed, an astute and already experienced conservative operative. By the early 1990s, the coalition was gaining footholds with victories in local elections. Its activists then stunned the national GOP with the strident tone of the 1992 convention in Houston. The coalition gained its current prominence with the Republican conquest of Congress in 1994: About 60 percent of candidates allied with the coalition or other religious right groups won that year in local, state and congressional elections.

Buoyed by that success, the coalition aggressively backed Newt Gingrich's Contract with America and Reed submitted the coalition's own sequel, the "Contract with the American Family." Repaying the coalition for its support, Gingrich attended Reed's announcement and pledged that the House Republicans would embrace the contract.

The coalition package calls both for more government intrusion into the morality of citizens' lives and less government action on social problems. The contract would enact a constitutional amendment abridging the principle of separation of church and state; kill the Department of Education; eliminate funding for the new Goals 2000 educational guidelines; impose criminal penalties against pornography on the Internet; replace the existing public school system with a program of school vouchers and "school choice"; expand "parental rights" over children; slash federal taxes; restrict abortions; and substitute private charities for "the bureaucratic welfare state." Some parts of the coalition's contract—including tax cuts, welfare reform and abortion restrictions—have advanced in the Republican Congress. Other provisions, however, have bogged down in committee as Congress first battles the White House over the budget and Medicare.

But the Christian right has its sights set on the future. It is claiming the role of kingmaker in the Republican presidential race. Defending its turf in the GOP, Christian right leaders joined with other conservatives to denounce retired Gen. Colin Powell, who was seen as insufficiently conservative on issues such as gun control, abortion and affirmative action. Powell had taken pains on his book tour to praise Gingrich's "revolution" and laud the Christian right "for focusing our attention again on the fact that we are a nation under God." But the hard-liners would not forgive Powell for his "Rockefeller Republican" ways.

On November 2, less than a week before Powell announced he would not run for the presidency, a dozen conservative leaders crowded around a podium at the National Press Club to attack the retired general. The 12 speakers—including Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council, Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation and David Keene of the American Conservative Union—squeezed past one another to the microphone to pummel Powell. "By the time we're finished, everybody is going to know where he stands," warned Keene. "It won't be a bed of roses." Others claimed that if Powell won the GOP nomination, there would be a "mass exodus" of conservatives from the Republican Party.

Weyrich, the godfather of the modern conservative movement and co-founder of the Moral Majority, used even harsher language in a private three-page letter to conservative Powell sympathizer William Bennett. In the letter, obtained by *In These Times*, Weyrich called Powell "a perfect example of someone who is the ultimate insider ... someone who never made waves or took risks or stood for anything."

"If you liked George Bush, you will love Colin Powell," Weyrich wrote. "Like Bush, [Powell] stands for very little and believes in very little, except that he would enjoy sitting in the big chair." Weyrich next counted Powell among the "politicians and would-be politicians" who "want to sit on the veranda of the big house and have the peasants bow before them."

"The ongoing conservative revolution in this country is a revolution against the Colin Powells of this world," Weyrich continued. "The battle division is Establishment vs. anti-Establishment. I am on the anti-Establishment side. So are most of the people who make up the conservative movement. Colin Powell is the ultimate Establishment man." This language reveals an odd paradox within the Christian right: even as religious conservatives steadily tighten their hold on power, they still see themselves as embattled populist outsiders. This cognitive dissonance turns up everywhere in the politics of the Christian right. Parents who resist fundamentalism in public schools become "liberals" conspiring with a shadowy cabal of elite policy-makers while wealthy businessmen running huge corporations and contributing to conservative coffers pose as anti-Establishment revolutionaries.

The Christian right has sometimes raised this outsider theme to extraordinary levels. In a 1994 fundraising letter, Robertson called Christians potentially "the next endangered

species right here in America." He has even compared the threat to Christians in the United States to the plight of Jews in Nazi Germany. "In Germany, ladies and gentlemen, Jews were placed in an inferior status," Robertson declared on the October 4, 1993 700 Club. "They couldn't identify themselves as Jews or they had to wear a Star of David and get put into ghettos and get stigmatized. And that's what the liberals want to do is stigmatize Christians."

The victim theme recurs, too, in the Contract with the American Family's lead proposal for "a constitutional amendment to protect the religious liberties of Americans in public places." This provision is needed, the contract says, to halt "the hostility of public institutions toward religious expression. ... Examples of hostility toward religious values and those who hold them abound."

But the coalition offers little concrete evidence to support these grievances. The contract cites the action of school officials in an elementary school in Nevada who objected to a planned student solo of "The First Noël" at a Christmas concert "because of its religious overtones."

A footnote, however, explains that "the decision was later reversed after counsel intervened." Similarly, the coalition bristles that nativity scenes are allowed on the lawns of some public buildings only if "accompanied by a non-religious display such as Santa Claus." The contract complains, too, that there have been cases in which "children have been told they cannot read the Bible during silent reading time" in schools. But again a footnote deflates the specter of humanist tyranny: "in both instances, the children were allowed to read their Bibles after counsel intervened."

To correct this short list of alleged injustices, the "religious equality" amendment would modify the First Amendment to the Constitution and override the Founding Fathers' principle of separation of church and state, a cornerstone of American democracy that religious right leaders term a "myth" anyway.

Keeping an eye on these shifts in Christian right ideology is the day-in-and-day-out job of 26-year-old David Mizner. Each morning, the casually dressed Mizner reports to work at the downtown Washington headquarters of People For the American Way. Mizner's assignment is to monitor the previous day's take of conservative TV that's been pulled off the satellite. After sliding a videocassette into a VCR, Mizner settles back into a sofa, his remote controller in hand, fast-forwarding through the shows on National Empowerment Television, the 24-hour conservative net-

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work that has joined Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network in beaming hard-edged right-wing programming to cable outlets and satellite dishes around the country. For more than two years, Mizner has been scanning what the right has been saying to itself—and to tens of millions of Americans.

"At the beginning, it was disturbing," says Mizner, a Columbia University journalism school graduate. "At one level, I find it fascinating because I've immersed myself in this subculture—and it really is a subculture, complete with its own history, its own worldview. But it's disturbing because I know that millions of people are believing this, are buying into this. It is not only where they get their religious inspiration, but their news, their entertainment." After a moment, Mizner adds: "I've gotten to understand what it might be like to view Pat Robertson as your leader."

Mizner is struck, too, by the Christian media's deep hostility toward public education and toward the government in general. "They're creating this class of people, generally white, generally middle class, who view themselves as being an oppressed class," Mizner says. "Potentially that's as dangerous as the specific agenda that they're pursuing. It fosters a lot of the actions that we see at the grass roots, a lot of the mean-spirited rhetoric, a lot of the devious tactics that they use. ... Pat Robertson says that this year the government is going to step up its attacks on Christians, its persecution of Christians. Think about the kinds of attitudes and the type

of behavior that that mentality could foster. And that's where there is the tie to some of the militia rhetoric."

Drawing from the research of Mizner and other staffers, People For the American Way has armed citizens across the country with timely information about the Christian right's strategies and tactics. But limited resources and restrictions on the political activity of tax-exempt groups such as Mizner's have prevented more direct aid to local organizers. People For the American Way offers some training programs for organizers and has cooperated in arranging candidate nights and voter guides in a few areas. Still, the efforts have been spotty. Though the group earmarked extra resources for this month's Virginia elections, the group actively assisted local organizers in only one-tenth of the state's school districts.

"It's clear the religious right is winning," says Freeman of People For the American Way. "We're getting killed at the grass roots, partly because of the unrelenting [right-wing] air war that's going on. It's the same message over and over again. Though it may not be true, it's true enough and it keeps them connected." The religious right is also winning the ground war, Freeman says, by knocking on more doors and marshaling more foot soldiers in local, state and national races. "Granted, there are enormous resource issues relating to money," adds Freeman. "It takes money to buy yourself a cable network. But the absence of that money shouldn't stop the progressive side from organizing [locally to] knock on other doors."

Forced to rely on their own resources, some grass-roots campaigns have proved successful. In Vista, Calif., a community of 70,000 30 miles north of San Diego, a radical right majority won control of the school board in 1993 because the community paid little attention to the candidates far down on the ballot. Soon, Christian right members were opening board meetings with prayers, replacing a state-approved sex education course and intimidating teachers.

Barbara Donovan, a concerned parent and lifelong Republican, organized a group to monitor the board's actions. But when that failed to moderate the board's extremism, parents and teachers launched a recall petition that ousted two fundamentalists, while a third chose not to seek re-election. After a disruptive year, the school system settled down to the business of educating students.

Donovan says now that one lesson the Vista experience offered is the need for communities to respond aggressively when radical right groups bid for less prominent local offices. But the larger problem, she feels, is the lack of a well-financed national response to the Christian Coalition and its allies. "They're all connected and funded," Donovan notes. "Everyone on the moderate side needs to do things from ground zero." The Vista recall drive was financed from small donations totaling only about \$1,000, with no significant backing from national organizations "Money is what you need, not good wishes," Donovan says. Other-

wise, the burden falls on individual citizens, who also must absorb personal attacks from Christian right activists. "I was denounced in a letter-writing campaign as a liberal masquerading as a moderate," Donovan adds. "Most people, if you're sane, don't want to put themselves and their families through that."

Similar battles have been fought in places such as Cedarburg, Wis., and Merrimack, N.H., where parents thwarted conservative bids to purge sex education from schools or to force creationism into science classes.

Mainstream and progressive Christians are opening on a second front in the battle against the Christian right. A national version of Cecile Richards' Texas Freedom Alliance is the year-old Washington, D.C.-based Interfaith Alliance, which is putting together an ecumenical coalition of church leaders to challenge hard-edged conservative fundamentalism. "Overnight, we became a grass-roots organization," says Jill Hanauer, the executive director. "There is something happening. I think things are turning around. [The conservatives] are not going unchecked anymore."

But Hanauer, too, stresses the Christian Coalition's major advantage in money. "We don't have enough staff to respond to the grass-roots needs," she says. The Interfaith Alliance's main effort in this election cycle was the distribution of 20,000 voter guides of its own in two northern Virginia districts.

Last spring Jim Wallis, the editor of *Sojourners*, a liberal evangelical magazine, published "The Cry for Renewal: Let Other Voices Be Heard," a pamphlet that drew support from dozens of religious leaders, including black ministers, Catholic priests and laymen, mainline Protestants and even evangelical Christians who believe that Jesus' teachings demand love of the poor. "Those Jesus told us to remember especially as 'the least of these' must be neither forgotten or scapegoated," the statement read. "To abandon or blame the poor for their oppression and affirm the affluent in their complacency would be a moral and religious failure, and is no alternative to social policies which have not succeeded."

Though working with a tiny staff, Wallis has called for a national conference in Washington on February 2-3 to discuss the larger social and spiritual crisis. Wallis says he wants this interdenominational coalition to address the plight of America's poor with creative ideas that reject both the liberal dependence on bureaucratic solutions and the harsh conservative remedies of the marketplace. "We're talking about new politics that challenges the right and the left," he says. "But from a Christian point of view, it is morally indefensible to slash and burn [welfare programs for the poor] without another system in place."

And for next year's elections, Wallis says he intends to make one point perfectly clear: " 'Christian' doesn't mean right-wing or the Republican Party." ◀

Robert Parry is a Washington, D.C.-based investigative reporter.



Great white hope

The unofficial capital of black America elects a white mayor.

By Salim Muwakkil

In spite of the ills that have long plagued Gary, Ind.—pollution, deindustrialization and all the rest—the city has nonetheless occupied a special place in the hearts of African-American political activists. For here, in 1967, black politics came of age with the election of Richard Hatcher, the first black mayor of a major American city.

But Gary's symbolic status as the unofficial political capital of black America did not deter its citizens this month from electing the city's first white mayor in nearly 30 years. The election of Scott King, a 44-year-old white attorney with little political experience, in a city that is nearly 90 percent black, has embarrassed many black activists. Yet the city's lingering malaise—reflected in another unofficial distinction, that of “murder capi-

tal”—triggered more than 80 percent of the electorate to cast their ballots for a white political newcomer. Their decision offers some hints about the state of black politics.

The city's new mayor is a Chicago native of Swedish descent. Married to a black woman, King has lived in Gary since 1980 and once served as assistant Lake County (Ind.) prosecutor. While he acknowledges the “cultural differences” that often separate blacks and whites, King argues that such differences won't hamper his ability to serve a largely African-American constituency. “Their African ancestry and my Swedish ancestry don't amount to a hill of beans,” he declared during the campaign. “My platform, not my skin color, is the change Gary needs and deserves.” During his campaign, King promised to run the city like a business—to focus on fiscal discipline, economic development and innovation in delivering city services. He also pushed a strong anti-crime message, although in crime-ravaged Gary, such a message is a virtual prerequisite for any politician. The city's sad state is a particularly bitter pill for those activists who once saw black America's political future in its bright promise.

As black organizers shifted their activities from civil rights protest to political campaigns in the '70s, the nation's aging industrial cities, particularly those in the North, took center stage. Five years after Hatcher's election, Gary hosted the first national black political convention, where delegates laid the groundwork for the remarkable proliferation of black elected officials that followed. Later that year, Cleveland's Carl Stokes joined Hatcher as a big-city black mayor, followed by Newark's Kenneth Gibson, Detroit's Coleman Young and Atlanta's Maynard Jackson. The number of black mayors skyrocketed from 48 in 1970 to 356 in 1993. But despite this explosive growth in mayoral clout (some would even say because of it), social conditions continued to deteriorate in the African-American communities of these black-led cities.

Gary exemplifies this unfortunate pattern. Founded in 1906 as a company town for the U.S. Steel Corp., the city's fortunes have risen and fallen with those of American steel manufacturing. At the industry's height, the vast steel works of southeast Chicago and northeast Indiana accounted for nearly 60,000 jobs, and related industries employed thousands more. By the mid-'60s, however, those jobs had begun to vanish. Hatcher's 1967 election accelerated a white exodus that was already under way, but it also attracted blacks eager to bask in the political limelight. Gary's population peaked at about 188,000 in the early '70s, but the shrinking steel industry deprived the city of the jobs and businesses that once provided a solid tax base. By the early '80s, the industry had virtually collapsed—with devastating results for Gary.

Today, Gary's population has shrunk to 116,000, and signs of the city's degradation are everywhere. Boarded-up buildings blight the downtown, hotels have disappeared and commercial activity has all but dried up. Thirty percent of the city's population lives below the poverty line. While Gary's official unemployment rate hovers around a dismal 14 percent, the rate among black youth reportedly tops 60

percent. Not surprisingly, the underground economy has picked up where the steel industry left off, and the city has gained a regional reputation as a thriving drug mall. Street crime has become so flagrant that Indiana Gov. Evan Bayh was recently compelled to dispatch 50 state troopers to help city officials keep the peace.

Faced with such an impossible situation, Gary's black political establishment has been able to do little but hold on to its power. Mayoral incumbent Thomas Barnes, who ended Hatcher's 20-year reign in 1987, declined to run for the office again this year. Nonetheless, he actively opposed King's candidacy, even pointing out in a letter to supporters that King "is a Caucasian" who has "no record of contribution to Gary." Barnes urged voters not to let Gary suffer the fate of New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Chicago. The black mayors of these cities, he wrote, were elected "during the mass business and population abandonment of the '70s and '80s [and] have been replaced [by whites], one by one." Barnes and Hatcher endorsed independent Marion Williams, a black high school principal and radio station owner. Williams received 13 percent of the vote, and Diane Boswell, a black Republican, won 4 percent.

If Barnes and Hatcher have found a white candidate's landslide victory in a black political stronghold disturbing, they have also been at a loss to explain its wider political significance. Barnes' letter echoed a widespread belief among African-Americans that whites long have conspired to retake those offices. "Some of that may be unreasonable paranoia," Hatcher says of the alarmist tone of the letter. "But some of it is reality. These cities are extremely valuable properties. And let's not fool ourselves: Some whites still believe that blacks don't deserve to control such riches." Hatcher has offered his assistance to King, but he admits that the white attorney's election was a bit embarrassing.

"I'm more embarrassed that our black mayor needed state troopers to keep order than I am about us black folks electing a white mayor," says Sonya Merrit, a long-term Gary resident who worked in Hatcher's first campaign. Although she didn't vote for King, Merrit says she's ready for change. "I used to be committed to the idea of a black mayor, but it really doesn't matter to me now." Her disenchantment with "skin" politics is a telling turn that coincides with larger legal efforts to move away from race-based voting schemes (see "The First Stone," page 12).

"Black voters have become more interested in getting results than anything else," says David Bositis, a senior analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington think tank that focuses on African-American concerns. "Black voters have always been more willing to support white candidates than white voters have been willing to support black candidates." But King's election, coming on the heels of the Million Man March and the resulting rhetoric of self-determination that now dominates the black movement, adds a complicating note.

Ironically, one black voter decided to back King after

considering the counsel of Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. "I had been struggling with my decision about this election when I went to the Million Man March," explains Melvin Ward, a 43-year-old Gary native. "I thought King may be the best man, but all the other candidates were black, and Gary has a reputation to uphold. But after I heard Farrakhan say that we should no longer vote for people just because of their skin color, I made up my mind to vote for King."

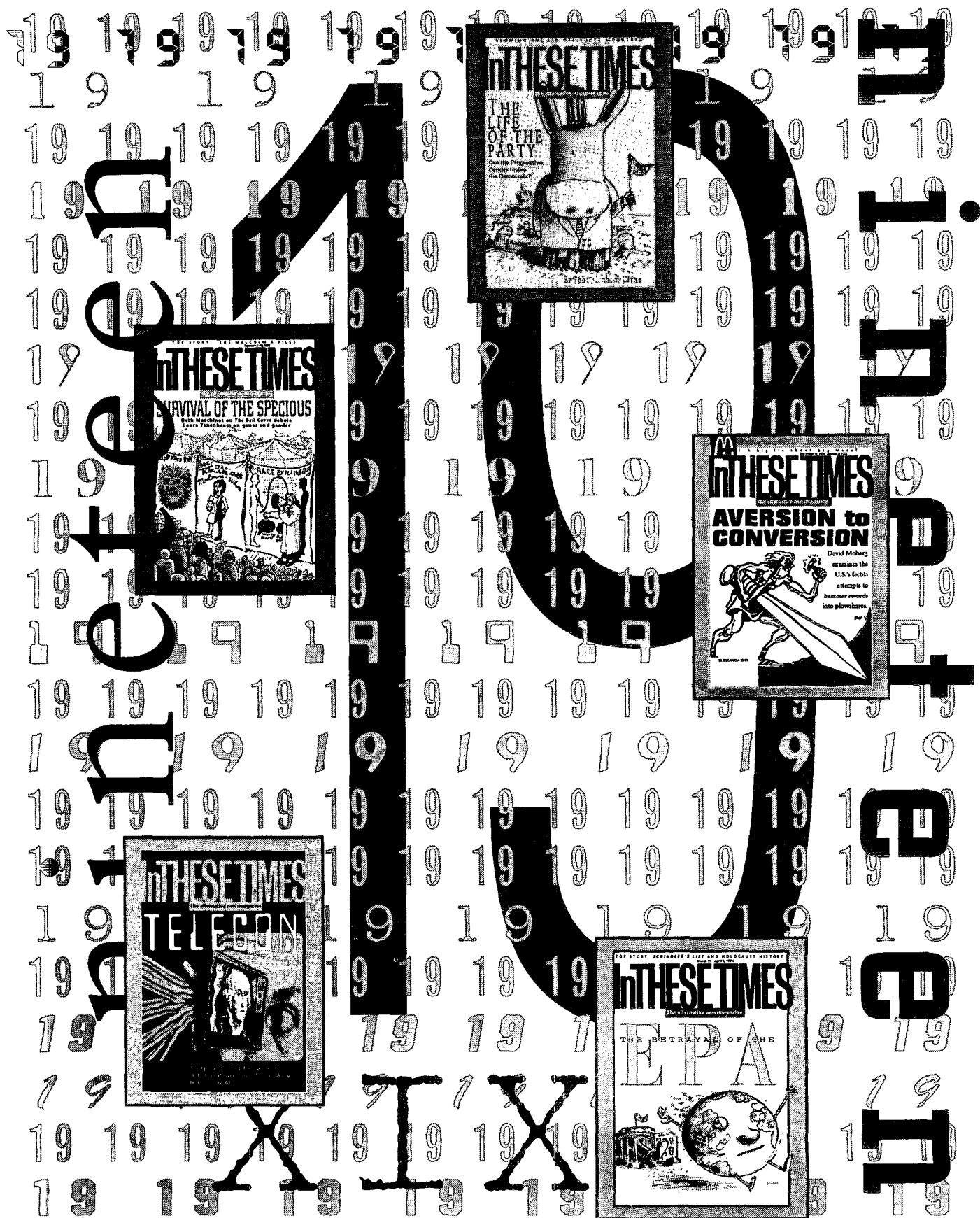
What's more, the conceit that black mayors are an extension of the civil rights movement has finally met a merciful death. If for the past three decades they enjoyed nationwide prestige, black big-city mayors today find that they, like their white predecessors, must satisfy a wide array of constituents. They have also learned that the crusading spirit of the black movement does little to aid them in building the kinds of coalitions and networks necessary for effective governing.

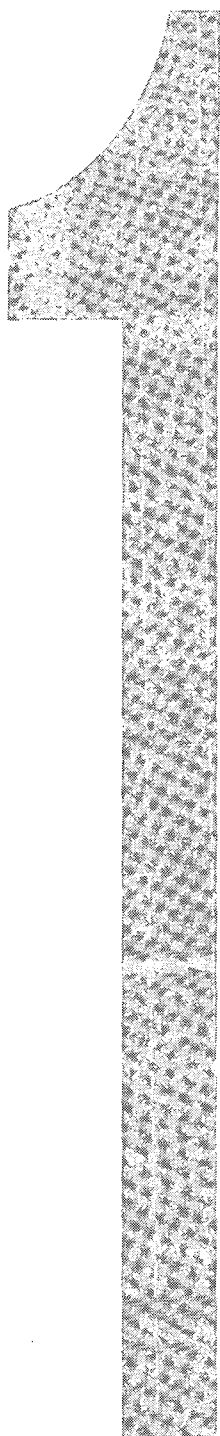
"We've all come into office with substantial black votes, and the black community in nearly every instance views our rise with inflated expectations," explains Kansas City's two-term black mayor, Emanuel Cleaver II. "But we don't lead demonstrations, because we have learned that you cannot agitate, negotiate and legislate at the same time."

In these days of budget cuts and anti-urban biases, new bridges need to be built and wider alliances negotiated. In fact, with the flow of federal largesse slowing to a trickle, most black mayors have had to cultivate more productive relationships with white-owned businesses to maintain solvency. Many African-American voters in Gary say they supported King because they thought he would have greater access to white business interests.

Candidate Marion Williams says he recognized this while campaigning. "When I went door to door, people said, 'We don't want any more of your people for mayor.' And those were African-Americans," he recalls. "Many felt that the 28 years of African-American leadership was enough. There was a feeling that the city needed a white man to run it." That motive has also been noted in other large cities that re-elected white mayors after a stint with blacks. "It shows how pessimistic some African-Americans have become," says James Lane, a history professor at Indiana University, Northwest in Gary. "There are a lot of people who think that maybe somebody will pay attention to us if we elect a white mayor."

But while some cities with large black populations have returned to white mayors, this trend does not spell the end of black civic leadership. In the last decade, several predominantly white cities—including Seattle, Denver, St. Louis, Dallas, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Mo., and Rockford, Ill.—have elected their first black mayors. Although race may have played a role both in galvanizing and dissipating support, it was the credible promise of results rather than racial symbolism that meant victory for these black elected officials. Gary's voters also rejected racial symbolism in choosing King. Or, as some critics have asked, was it symbolism of a different kind? ◀





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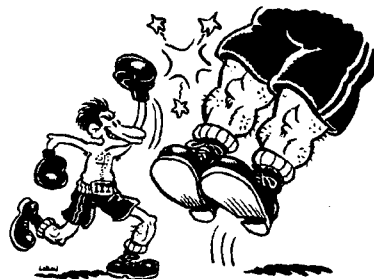


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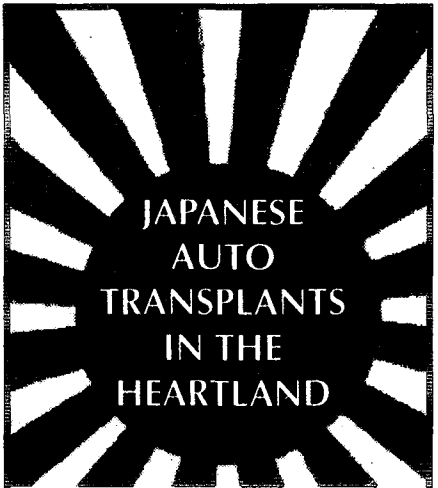
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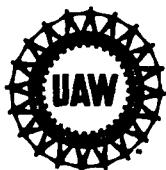
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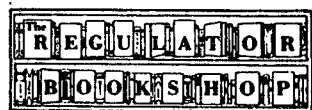
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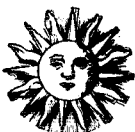
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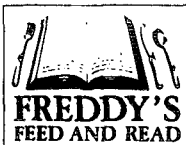
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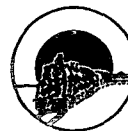
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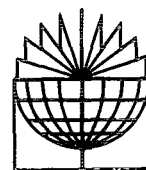
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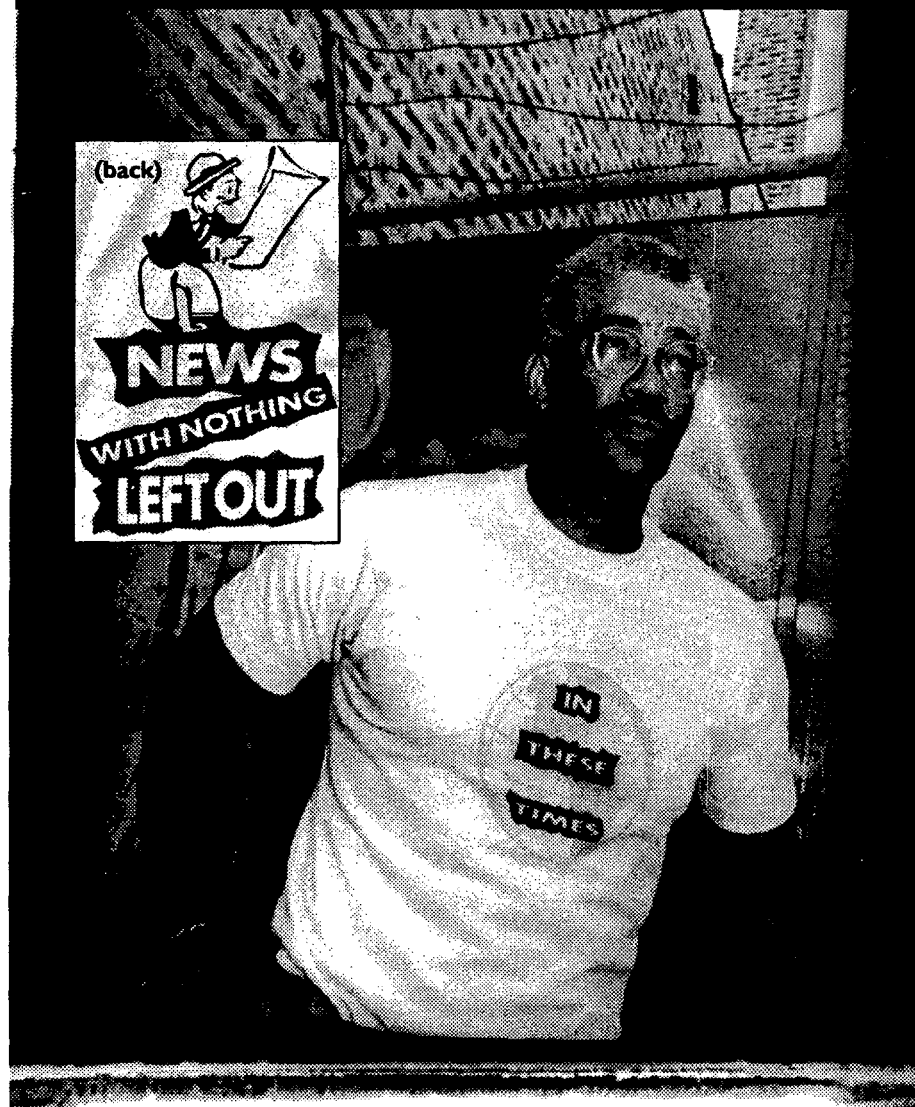
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POLITICS

Law and disorder

A

Cuts in federal legal aid threaten to put the poor beyond the pale of the justice system.

By Nina Schuyler

After two years of beatings, Sarah Buel finally decided she'd had enough. On Labor Day 1977, with a small suitcase, a few dollars in her purse and her 2-year-old son, she took the family car and left her husband. As she made her way from New York to her mother's house in New Hampshire, Buel considered her options. Locked in the same relationship since she was 16, she'd never gone to college and had only held down one job, as a telemarketer. Her mother was supportive, but too poor to help her get on her feet. Finally, Buel, then 23, decided she'd have to go on welfare.

But when she talked to counselors there was a catch: To receive benefits,

they told her she would have to send child-support invoices to her husband. In other words, she would have to let him know where she was. Unwilling to run the risk that he might come after her, Buel instead turned to the New Hampshire Legal Aid Society—one of the many law offices nationwide that benefited from the 1974 initiative to distribute legal aid grants through the newly formed nonprofit Legal Services Corporation (LSC). The attorneys there not only helped Buel get on welfare without disclosing her whereabouts; they also gave her a job as a paralegal and helped her line up other support services such as food stamps and subsidized housing. Within 10 years, Buel had put herself through night school. In 1987, she was admitted to Harvard Law School.

Now a 42-year-old prosecutor in the domestic violence unit in Norfolk County, Mass., and the founder of an innovative countywide program aimed at breaking patterns of abuse, Buel says that affordable legal representation gave her a voice in a system that had previously silenced her. "Before, I'd only seen police who would not arrest my husband. Courts would tell me it was my job to make the violence stop," she says. "I had no idea what my rights really were. Legal aid restored my faith in the justice system."

Now, however, the Republican-dominated Congress intends to slash spending on LSC, a nonprofit agency that allocates federal funds to 323 legal aid offices nationwide. GOP leaders such as Phil Gramm argue that LSC, which was created during the Nixon administration, is a liberal front that wastes money to advance special interests. Congressional critics decry common legal aid practices such as lobbying legislatures and government agencies on behalf of the poor; bringing class-action suits against public agencies; and taking cases from prisoners, illegal immigrants and women seeking abortions.

The attack on LSC and its offspring is nothing new. Right-wing hostility to initiatives providing legal representation to the poor dates back to the earliest formalized legal assistance programs of the '60s. But this year, LSC is facing its most intensive fight ever. Indeed, in September, the House Judiciary Committee adopted a bill that would have phased out LSC funding altogether. LSC's unlikely saviors, says corporation spokesman Robert Echols, were conservatives who claimed that the proposed four-year phaseout was too slow. Nevertheless, the battle is far from over. A Senate budget resolution would reduce LSC's funding from \$400 million to \$310 million. The House seeks to gouge even deeper, cutting funds to \$278 million. As of the November 14 government shutdown, the joint House and Senate conference to determine LSC's

final fate had not yet been scheduled, but the corporation is braced for anything, says Echols. Both of the congressional bills seek, in any event, to institute a severe "brain drain," eliminating aid to the 16 national legal aid support centers, which employ some of the country's most experienced poverty lawyers as consultants to legal aid lawyers nationwide.

Even worse than these brutal cuts, however, are provisions in the new laws that would strike at the heart of legal aid practice: lobbying and filing class-action suits and suits challenging welfare reform initiatives. Especially punishing is the ban on cases involving child support and social security insurance benefits—cases that traditionally have made up the bulk of legal aid work and brought in legal fees to supplement federal funding. Between cuts and newly imposed restrictions, say poverty lawyers, it will be nearly impossible for LSC to serve the 1.7 million clients who request help—with anything from advice to full-fledged lawsuits—each year.

The tragedy, of course, is that with vital support services being slashed, poor people need legal representation more than ever. "Welfare, Aid for Families with Dependent Children and Medicaid are being overhauled and most likely turned over to states to administer," says John O'Toole, the director of the National Youth Law Center in San Francisco, one of the national centers slated for funding cuts. "Who will help think through the designs of these programs? Who will interpret the rules? Who will challenge the plans? These are the most sweeping changes in the relationship between poor people and the government since the Great Depression."

Indeed, the legal aid movement had its earliest roots in the last great growth spurt of the U.S. welfare state, in Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Until the '60s, legal aid was essentially a catch-as-catch-can effort. Each year, a motley assortment of providers such as law school clinics, sections of state bar associations, some municipalities and private law offices spent only about \$4 million nationally to file piecemeal individual cases, mostly dealing with divorces or landlord-tenant and consumer issues. They never filed welfare cases, class actions or appeals. In 1964, Johnson asked the American Bar Association (ABA) and the newly formed Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to evaluate legal assistance programs.

Part of the executive branch, the OEO was created in 1964 when Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act. A linchpin of Johnson's Great Society, the OEO developed a number of programs—such as Head Start, job training and community action agencies—to help push LBJ's anti-poverty initiatives forward at a local level. The administration hoped that legal assistance lawyers could help implement the new initiatives. But in evaluating existing private programs, the OEO and the ABA determined that they were too scattershot to be of much use. In response, the OEO established the Legal Services

Program as part of the executive branch.

The new program—which recruited young lawyers to file class-action suits against state and local governments with inadequate anti-poverty measures—raised political hackles. Angry that a branch of the federal government was actively seeking to sue them, elected officials such as then-California Gov. Ronald Reagan fought back. In 1967, after Reagan attacked Medi-Cal (the state agency that provides medical coverage for public aid recipients) by cutting eye and ear exams and capping Medi-Cal funding of hospital stays, California Rural Legal Assistance successfully sued the state for reinstatement of full coverage. Out for blood, Reagan fought for and won congressional legislation that gave governors the power to throw suits filed by OEO-funded legal aid offices out of court. However, given that the OEO director could reinstate the case upon review, the Legal Services Program remained a significant thorn in the sides of state and municipal governments.

In 1974, President Richard Nixon attempted to depoliticize the program by removing it from the executive branch and bringing it under the aegis of a federal nonprofit entity. "[W]e have learned that legal assistance for the poor, when properly provided, is one of the most constructive ways to help them help themselves," he said in a speech announcing the formation of LSC. "We have also learned that justice is served far better and differences are settled more rationally within the court system than on the streets."

Trying to make LSC more politically palatable than the controversial Legal Services Program, Nixon also stipulated that the nonprofit's focus should be on helping the poor gain access to the courts, rather than on correcting systemic problems. But the *modus operandi* of legal aid changed little. According to Alan Houseman, the executive director of the Center for Law and Social Policy in Washington, D.C., LSC funded essentially the legal services programs the OEO oversaw, while dramatically expanding their ranks. A 1973 report from the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare estimated that, nationwide, there were only 400 legal aid attorneys to serve some 50 million eligible citizens. By 1980, however, LSC was serving every county in the country.

After years of sniping from conservative critics, LSC took its first serious financial hit in 1981 under Ronald Reagan's first federal budget. But even though Reagan wanted to eliminate the program, LSC—backed by key congressional advocates such as Sen. Warren Rudman (R-NH)—retained 75 percent of its funding.

Among the factors now weighing against LSC, say legal aid lawyers, is that, unlike Rudman in '81, the nonprofit's supporters no longer hold key congressional positions. Moreover, its main defender, Pete Domenici (R-NM), espouses a watered-down philosophy of legal aid. "[Domenici] doesn't want lawyers doing class actions, welfare reform litigation or legislative activities," says

Houseman. "It's his view that poverty lawyers should be handling individual clients' cases and not trying to change rules or laws. It's a very different vision from what has guided LSC. It's a return to a pre-1965 philosophy of legal aid."

As legal assistance reverts back to its earlier, piecemeal model, the first LSC-funded services to disappear will be the national support centers. Many of these centers, which employ legal experts in specialized areas such as foster care, housing, health or welfare, among others, receive anywhere from 75 to 90 percent of their budgets from LSC. A few, like the National Youth Law Center in San Francisco, count on LSC for only 50 percent of their funding and will survive—with serious belt-tightening. The San Francisco center has had to cut salaries by 10 percent, eliminate its retirement program and lay off two of eight attorneys as well as two of three members of its support staff. Moreover, because class actions have been banned from legal aid's federally funded repertoire, much of the center's power to help its clients has been gutted.

Even though class actions represent a tiny fraction of all litigation brought by LSC attorneys, the suits can have a powerful impact. In 1983, the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago (LAF) filed a class-action suit challenging the Illinois Department of Public Aid for keeping child-support payments it was holding in trust for families on welfare. Required to pay up once the family got off welfare, the state was instead holding onto the funds. In a 1989 settlement, the LAF retroactively restored payments to more than 100,000 families, and the state established accounting procedures to prevent a recurrence of the problem.

In the face of expected financial shortfalls, Congress has proposed a competitive bidding procedure in which the lowest bidders—whether private or public-interest attorneys—will receive government contracts to provide legal aid services. Since LSC's founding, legal aid offices, once funded, have been automatically refunded as long as they adhere to LSC regulations. Under proposed reforms, however, LSC funds will be open to any lawyer who offers to work on the cheap. But competitive bidding in legal services has a spotty record of success. One 1985 pilot project in Orange County resulted in a frantic scramble for work, driving bids so low that one attorney (a nun) went bankrupt, while another group of attorneys vowed never to do so much for so little again. Yet another lawyer sued LSC when he couldn't collect payment from the corporation.

With few other options, LSC has recommended a number of cost-cutting tactics to local legal aid offices. But the tactics, which include strategies such as paring down already skeletal staffs, will hamper remaining attorneys in their efforts to help clients. And, as many legal assistance attorneys note, proposed stopgap measures provide little in the way of real aid.

"Because of reduced resources, you'll see us and [other] programs around the country turn to hotlines as a primary

way of providing services to the poor," says Robert Cohen, the executive director of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, which, with a client base of 14,000, had to lay off two of 17 attorneys this year. "That puts more resources into serving clients with simple problems and means we can't address the more complex situations with which people really need help." Besides hotlines, other interim solutions include clinics to teach people how to deal with landlord/tenant disputes, file for divorce or get unemployment benefits.

Well-intentioned or not, such flimsy efforts to patch the holes left by Republican cuts and restrictions will leave many out in the cold. And almost no one remains more exposed than battered women like Sarah Buel. For among the cases that legal aid attorneys say they will no longer be able to address adequately are divorce cases involving domestic violence. Such complex cases—which often involve long suits contested at every step—may simply prove too much for overburdened poverty lawyers to handle. Thanks to a comprehensive legal aid program with federal backing, Buel escaped her abusive husband. Women now may not be so lucky.

"There is a role for government in helping people who don't have any other voice," says Buel, still a fierce supporter of legal assistance. And legal aid clients—all of whom fall below the poverty line and more than half of whom are women—are all too often kept silent by the complexities of the court system. Without access to legal assistance, they will remain vulnerable and be left to sort out their differences as best they can.

"The right-wing Republicans always accuse us of being a left-wing group that foments change and wants to overthrow the government," says Ken Theisen, a staff attorney at the San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation. "The reality is, we tell people not to turn to violence as a recourse, but to use the legal system. Once you take the illusion of justice away, people will turn to other means as a recourse."

Nina Schuyler is a legal reporter in San Francisco.

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LABOR

Nursing grievances

M

aria Samuel does not have an easy job. A nurse's aide at the Pine Towers nursing home in San Francisco, Samuel cares not only for frail elderly residents but also for AIDS patients, combative Alzheimer's victims, and even recovering heart-bypass patients. Often without adequate supplies of basic items such as towels or gloves, she rushes among three floors, caring for 20 or more residents. Samuel's grueling pace raises the risk of injury for her—and the risk that her patients will suffer neglect.

"They need attention, and a lot need to talk," she says. "It relieves their stress if they have a few minutes to talk, but if you're rushing, you can't do it. We try our best, but sometimes I feel guilty because we should do more."

A historic effort to unionize nursing homes aims to improve the quality of life for patients and staff.

By David Moberg

This article is part of an ongoing series about innovative strategies that are reshaping American labor.

Now through her union, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Samuel is trying to do more. The union has just won a key victory in its campaign called Dignity, Rights and Respect, which aims to bring higher nationwide standards to the industry and to expand workers' power to provide better care.

"We should get better wages, better staffing and proper supplies," Samuel says. And Samuel believes that, given the growing severity of illnesses among residents, she should care for no more than 10 patients at a time. In September Samuel and her co-workers at Pine Towers went out on a one-day strike to back up those demands. The facility's owner, Hillhaven Corp., brought in strikebreakers, who had to care for only seven patients, she says, "and they were complaining about that." After 25 years as a certified nursing assistant (CNA), Samuel makes \$9.43 an hour. Starting CNAs at Hillhaven make only \$6, the median pay nationally in a

fragmented industry with low pay, poor working conditions and high turnover. (The turnover rate for CNAs at Hillhaven's California facilities was 122 percent in 1993.)

Nationwide, roughly 1.2 million employees—mainly women and disproportionately people of color—work in more than 17,000 nursing homes. The industry grew rapidly after the 1965 passage of Medicaid, which subsidized nursing home care for the elderly. But expansion slowed in the '80s, as states—which set Medicaid reimbursement rates and pick up part of the tab—moved to contain costs. Although Medicaid still pays for nearly three-fourths of all patient stays in nursing homes, Medicaid payments are the nursing-home industry's least profitable revenue stream. The industry, which is profitable as a whole, makes more money off private patients and from contracts with insurance companies or HMOs. But the hottest growth area—with profits per bed double regular levels—is in "subacute care," the largely unregulated mode of care in which seriously ill patients, who in the past would have stayed in hospitals, are now shunted to less costly nursing homes.

Currently, the industry remains extremely fragmented; the top 20 chains control only about 20 percent of nursing-home beds. Nevertheless, consolidation by for-profit chains or other new medical conglomerates is seen as the wave of the future. Chains typically pursue the most lucrative patients and expand into ancillary businesses, such as pharmaceutical distribution or home care. Ongoing investigations by the FBI and two state attorneys general suggest that many chains "game" the system by maximizing billing for special services and utilizing other questionable practices. Industry surveys suggest that chains reduce costs somewhat (while boosting



profits and executive salaries), but they've also cut corners by skimping on staffing, supplies and care. A *Consumer Reports* survey of nursing homes last summer ranked most for-profit chains near the bottom in quality. Also, cost-cutting and understaffing contributed to a 55 percent increase in occupational injury and illness for nursing-home workers between 1983 and 1993, making it twice as dangerous as the average private-sector job, worse even than in the construction or manufacturing sectors.

Unions have been successfully organizing nursing-home workers despite the hardball anti-union tactics employed by for-profits and not-for-profits alike. Still, less than 15 percent of nursing-home workers belong to unions, and more than half of them are with SEIU. As part of its Dignity, Rights and Respect campaign, the union hopes to improve wages, benefits, training, security and workloads for employees, thereby creating career-oriented workers who will have more rewarding employment and will be able to provide better care.

The union recently won breakthrough victories at two big chains, GranCare and the Sun Healthcare Group, bringing SEIU closer to its goal of setting stronger regional and national standards in negotiations. It is embroiled in a similar battle in California with Hillhaven, the nation's second largest chain, and soon, in coordination with the Food and Commercial Workers, SEIU will take on Beverly Enterprises, the country's biggest chain.

SEIU has prepared for these contract showdowns over several years. The union carefully coordinated the timing of negotiations at its facilities so that two-thirds of its 900 nursing-home contracts would expire this year. That allowed

SEIU leaders have made the quality of care in nursing homes a leading issue in their latest campaign.

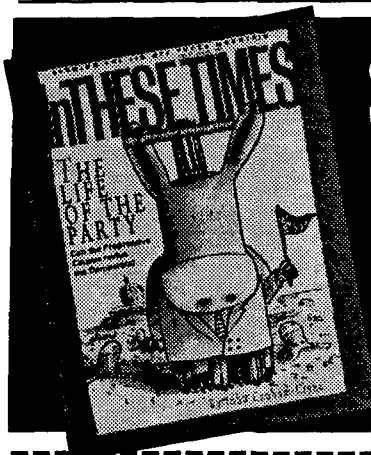
SEIU's big San Francisco health care local. The contract provides workers an industry rarity, pensions, which will be paid by the company into the union's pension fund. As an experiment in several facilities, GranCare will also pay for a patient-care representative—chosen by the union—to help solve problems of staffing and quality of care. Seeking to use its bargaining power to help organize the unorganized, the union got the company to agree to a "code of conduct" that limits anti-union activity and ensures union access to workers in organizing drives. The company also agreed to accept the results of expedited representation elections. These elections will not be overseen by the National Labor Relations Board, which means that balloting won't be subject to the legal delays that companies often exploit in labor-board elections.

In contract negotiations with several smaller companies, SEIU persuaded employers to recognize the union immediately if a majority of workers in a facility simply signs union cards; those agreements also press employers to remain neutral in organizing drives. "Using the power of organized workers to circumvent legal restrictions on workers and to counter the boss's power is extremely important," says Paul Kumar, the political director of SEIU's New England Local 1199N. "This is a cornerstone of future organizing."

Though workers in the unorganized homes show strong

SEIU to apply more unified negotiating pressure on nursing-home operators. (The union hopes to establish national standards for contract issues such as worker retraining, union recognition and employee input, says David Snapp, SEIU's national nursing-home campaign director. But because states establish Medicaid reimbursement rates, the union intends to establish uniform wages only for each state.)

The GranCare contract, which covers workers in Michigan, Wisconsin and California, dramatically moves toward national standards. "It's the single most important victory in our nursing-home division" in many years, according to Sal Rosselli, the president of



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interest in unions, it is tough to win an initial contract—or a better contract later—targeting one facility at a time. Nursing-home workers have little traditional union power, since employers can quickly replace most of them if they strike. SEIU has mobilized workers at all the chains this year for possible full-scale strikes, but so far it has called only selective, one-day strikes.

Primarily, the union has had to rely on other tactics. Among those employed at GranCare were workplace demonstrations of solidarity. Union members refused to participate in an “appreciation” lunch since the company neglected to show its appreciation in the contract. And at one facility, the union conducted a “work-in,” with 100 union members protesting understaffing by showing up to volunteer their services. Recently, SEIU sponsored a freedom train ride with Jesse Jackson from Sacramento to San Francisco that picked up hundreds of Hillhaven workers along the way for a final rally in support of workers at five homes on a one-day strike. Hillhaven retaliated by permanently replacing about 20 strikers, most of whom were rank-and-file leaders, according to the union. The company also locked out 60 other workers. Local 250 responded immediately with protests directed at Hillhaven management.

Throughout its campaign, SEIU has emphasized its commitment to quality patient care, noting that facilities with poor working conditions make for inferior treatment of patients. By making this link, the union has recruited support from advocates of better patient care, such as state legislators, who are under pressure to raise industry standards and prohibit corporate gouging while still ensuring adequate reimbursement. SEIU has also compiled and published data on corporate mismanagement and inadequate patient care. Union exposés and pressure led Healthnet, a major HMO in California, to stop sending patients to Hillhaven.

In Connecticut, Local 1199N eventually boosted top pay for CNAs to a national high of \$12.45 an hour and took out two ads in the *Wall Street Journal* calling attention to federal investigations of fraud and other legal violations at Sun Healthcare. When the company's stock value dropped, it retaliated with a lawsuit against the local union.

Republican Medicaid cuts will put new pressure on the industry, workers and the union, but cuts may also give workers new incentives to organize. “No one in their right mind wants Medicaid and Medicare slashed for vulnerable Americans,” Snapp says, “but I can imagine how we could organize in either scenario.”

However the industry is restructured, the union is now better positioned to influence it and to carry on long-term battles. “We’ll fight as long as it takes,” Rosselli says of his Hillhaven campaign, which has already lasted most of the year. “The homes, residents and workers will stay there, but we’ll drive Hillhaven out of California if we have to. We have no choice.”

ISRAEL

Aftershocks of an assassination

D

espite the tremendous shock and massive outpouring of grief that have convulsed Israel in the wake of the November 4 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the troubled course of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process seems unlikely to change. To be sure, many short-term signs suggest that the assassination may have shifted political opinion back toward the Labor camp and the cause of peace. Many Israelis have made the remembrance of Rabin an occasion to draw together in mournful introspection. More than one-fifth of the country's population filed past his body as it lay in state in the Knesset plaza or paid respects to the cortege leading to Rabin's grave site on Mount Herzl. The Kings of Israel Square in Tel Aviv where Rabin was shot has already been renamed Yitzhak Rabin Square; and thousands of young Israelis, between the ages of 10 and 20, contin-

ued to hold vigils there and outside Rabin's homes in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem for more than a week after the assassination.

Yet the assassination and its aftermath probably will not alter the landscape of Israeli politics. The peace process with the Arab states and the PLO—the focus of Rabin's government and the central theme of Israeli history this decade—will likely continue undeterred. Negotiations with Syria will proceed as planned. In the coming months, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) will gradually withdraw from the West Bank's main cities and, shortly afterward, the Palestinians will hold general elections. Israel and the Palestinians will begin negotiating (probably in May 1996) a final peace settlement.

The Labor government moved with alacrity to resolve many of the immediate questions raised by Rabin's murder. The refashioned cabinet, under the leadership of former Foreign Minister and one-time Prime Minister Shimon Peres, will, if anything, be slightly

more dovish in composition than its predecessor. The government will remain in its full four-year term of office, with general elections to be held as scheduled next November.

In many respects, the assassination of Rabin bears comparison with that of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, who was gunned down by Islamic fundamentalists in Cairo in 1981. Sadat was murdered in part because he had signed peace agreements with Israel, bringing to an end the belligerence that had characterized Israeli-Egyptian relations since Israel's founding in 1948. Rabin was murdered because he—and Peres—had recognized the PLO and promoted the peace process.

Many Israelis who had opposed the Egypt accords had argued in the late '70s that Israel should not give up the Sinai peninsula in exchange for peace and that the Egyptians could not be trusted, even if Sadat himself could. The moment he was removed from the scene, the argument went, his successors would tear up the treaty and Israel would have neither peace nor land to show for it. But Egyptian and Middle Eastern history confounded these dire forecasts. Sadat's successor, President Hosni Mubarak, stuck to the letter of the agreement, and peace, sometimes lukewarm, sometimes chilly, but peace nonetheless, has governed relations between the two countries ever since.

The upcoming elections, more than any realignment spurred by the assassination, will decide the future contours of the Israeli political scene. Between now and next November, any number of events—bus-bombings by Muslim terrorists, for example, or the start of final-stage negotiations with the PLO—could dramatically sway minds and votes. At best, the assassination may have lastingly tilted leftward some portion of the 10 percent or so of Israeli voters who traditionally have floated between left and right.

Yitzhak Rabin's death won't change much in the Middle East—and the subculture of violence that spawned the murder may still go unchecked.

By Benny Morris
JERUSALEM

But any such electoral gain on Labor's part will most likely be counterbalanced by the loss of its greatest electoral asset, Yitzhak Rabin. Peres today may enjoy more popularity than when he led Labor to defeat in successive elections in 1977, 1981, 1984 and 1988. But he will probably never have Rabin's electoral appeal. Rabin inspired a great deal of trust among Israelis. His distinguished military record projected a core sense of no-nonsense devotion to Israel's security that no right-wing politician was able to challenge or undermine.

Precisely for this reason, in fact, Peres will probably try to emulate Rabin's course in setting both the substantive terms of the peace and the pace of its implementation. In order to "sell" the upcoming peace moves to the Israeli public and to secure the re-election of the Labor government next year, Peres must appear to be moving toward peace in measured, ultra-careful strides rather than in a headlong, conciliatory rush. Above all, he must not appear "soft" on the Arabs or "weak," a sure-fire recipe for electoral disaster.

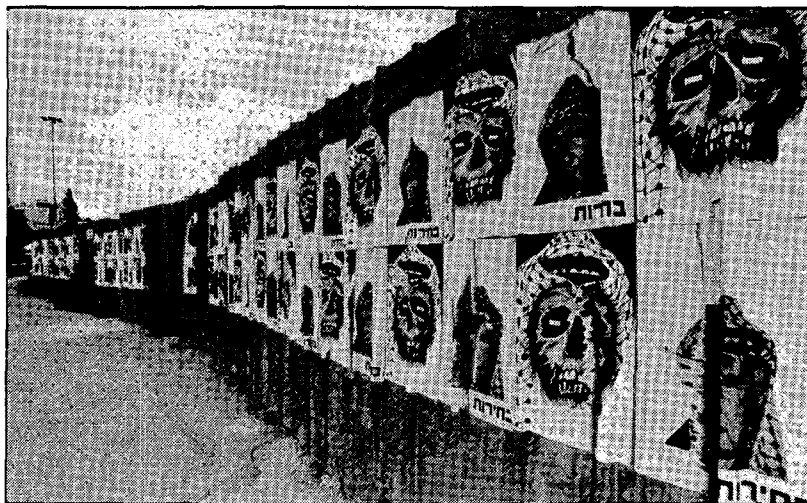
In the long term, Rabin's assassination is unlikely to move any hearts or minds among the politicians, party activists and supporters of the opposition. The allegiance of these opposition forces covers a wide spectrum on the right: from the Likud and its sister parties—Tzomet (meaning "crossroads," led by Greater Israel supporter and Reserves General Rafael Eitan), the National Religious Party (NRP) and Moledet (meaning "homeland," led by Reserves General Rehavam Ze'evi) to the fanatical and semi-fanatical extraparlimentary factions and movements. Rabin's assassin, Yigal Amir, and his accomplices emerged from this latter grouping, which includes Gush Emunim ("the bloc of the faithful"), Zo Artzenu ("This is our country"), Eyal (an acronym for Irgun Yehudi Leumi, or the National Jewish organization), and Kahane Hai ("Kahane Lives"). Right-wing opponents of the peace may harbor some remorse over the destructive form, but not the ideological content, of Amir's action: Activists on the right will continue to believe and preach—as Amir does—that the peace process is leading to the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and to withdrawal from the Golan Heights that will endanger Israel's existence.

To be sure, the right will probably temper many of its harsher political pronouncements and utterances in the coming months. Indeed, the Israeli police and judicial authorities have already begun a crackdown against the unrestrained, hate-filled rhetoric that allowed Amir and his friends to feel that they were merely carrying out the popular—as well as the divine—will. No longer will right-wing crowds be able to chant "Rabin (Peres) is a murderer," "Rabin (Peres) is a traitor" and hold aloft placards showing Israeli ministers in Nazi dress while Likud, Tzomet, the NRP and Moledet leaders look on approvingly and offer their own singular contributions.

Likewise, many of the right's more confrontational

actions may be reined in, at least in the short term. No longer, one assumes, will the police and the IDF allow West Bank (Judea and Samaria) settlers and their supporters to run riot against Arabs in downtown Hebron, illegally squat on West Bank hillsides, block traffic on Israel's highways or harass peace-supporting MKs, as they have done freely during the past two years.

Nevertheless, crackdowns seem unlikely to reverse the startling deterioration of Israeli political debate. The differences of opinion over vital, indeed existential, questions, remain deep. Since the 1993 Oslo accords, Israeli politics



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The hate-filled rhetoric of the Israeli right helped prepare the ground for Rabin's assassination.

has suffered an extreme lack of restraint and absence of civilized discourse, especially on the part of the right. In their efforts to derail the peace process and bring down the government, right-wing politicians have mounted a systematic campaign in the Knesset and in public rallies to delegitimize the main coalition parties, Labor and Meretz, their policies and their leaders—in short, to delegitimize the government. Likud leaders Binyamin Netanyahu, Yitzhak Shamir and Ariel Sharon, Moledet leader Rehav'am Ze'evi, Tzomet leader Rafael Eitan and Mafdel leader Zevulun Hammer all participated in this incitement, variously branding Rabin and his government "criminals," "Nazis," "Quislings," and likening them to Ernest Bevin (the reputedly anti-Semitic British foreign secretary from 1945-1951), the collaborationist Vichy regime of World War II and the Judenrat (the Jewish committees in the ghettos of Nazi-occupied Europe that cooperated with the Nazis).

Most Israeli commentators agree that this rhetoric of delegitimization and "criminalization" has helped forge the mindset of Amir and his co-conspirators. But this analysis obscures more potent and direct influences on their action—a tradition of illegal political activism and a group of spiritual mentors who mapped out religious justifications for political extremism.

Amir and his friends were educated in the national religious school system—Amir attended the Kerem DeYavne yeshiva and Bar Ilan University—that was, and remains, the seedbed of Gush Emunim, the settler movement that heralds the continued growth of “Greater Israel.” Here, teachers and rabbis brought home the message that fealty to the Land of Israel is the supreme divine command, outweighing all other imperatives, including “Thou shalt not kill.” Here the young Amir and his friends learned that the Law of God (“Halacha”) is more important than the Law of Man, that God, rather than the state, must be obeyed. Whole schools of rabbis brought up in this system taught, advised and preached to a generation of disaffected Israelis, interpreting the Halacha in a narrow, ultranationalist manner.

Throughout the late '60s and '70s, Gush Emunim continuously broke the law in its campaign to set up Jewish settlements on the West Bank. The Labor-led governments of the day, under prime ministers Eshkol, Meir and Rabin, continuously bent to their will, and the settlements grew and multiplied. During the '80s, even though the Likud-led government of Menachem Begin promoted settlement, groups of settlers seeking to counter the growth of Palestinian nationalism set up the Jewish “Underground,” a terrorist organization that murdered a handful of Arab students in Hebron, severely injured a number of Arab mayors of West Bank towns and planned to blow up the mosques on the Temple Mount in order to facilitate the construction of the Third Temple in Jerusalem. These terrorists were eventually caught—but successive Israeli justice ministers and presidents commuted their sentences and pardoned them. Within six years of committing multiple murders, none of the convicted “Underground” members was in jail.

The return of Labor to power in 1992, together with the news of the Israel-PLO negotiations, triggered a renewed campaign of Jewish terrorism against Arabs in the West Bank—in large part a reaction to Arab terrorism against Jews—as well as a sustained effort to vilify the government. The settlers and their supporters, with rabbinical sanction, almost daily broke the law in attacks on Arabs and Arab property, and continuously mounted illegal demonstrations in the Occupied Territories and in Israel proper.

The most important milestone in this longer buildup to the assassination was probably last February's slaughter of some 30 Arab worshippers in the Mosque of Abraham (the Tomb of the Patriarchs) by another religious, right-wing fanatic, the American-born Baruch Goldstein. The subsequent failure of the government to crack down on the Israeli right's lunatic fringe only aggravated the climate of extremism. Indeed, with official sanction, the settler movement turned Goldstein's grave in the Hebron Jewish suburb of Kiryat Arba into a lavish memorial and point of pilgrimage.

Since then, rabbinic support for anti-government agitation has grown more strident. Less than a year ago, a convocation of the rabbis of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District issued a ruling (*psak halacha*) calling on IDF soldiers to disobey orders to evacuate settlements or camps in the West

Bank. In another, secret ruling five months ago 11 (or more) rabbis gave a green light to the assassination of Rabin and Peres by agreeing that their fate should be that of *rodef* (one who hunts a Jew in order to kill him) or *mosser* (one who hands over Jews or parts of the Land of Israel to non-Jews). Less than two months ago, a number of rabbis and Kabbalists issued and published a curse (*pulsa de'nura*) against Rabin, calling for his murder and consigning his soul to utter darkness. It is likely that Amir personally, or directly through one of his co-conspirators, received sanction for the planned assassination from one or more rabbis.

This national-religious tradition of lawlessness clearly dovetails with an older tradition of right-wing “Revisionist” terrorism that dogged the Yishuv and Israel from the '30s through the '50s. Revisionist Zionists formed the right wing of the Zionist movement, countering its predominantly socialist leadership. In 1948, the Revisionist movement became the Herut party, led by Menachem Begin; in the 1980s, Herut changed its name to the Likud.

Revisionist Zionists may have murdered the director of the Jewish Agency's political department, Chaim Arlosoroff, back in 1933 (in the end, no one was convicted). They certainly murdered hundreds of Arab pedestrians (and occasionally Jews) in terrorist campaigns in the late '30s and '40s. Occasionally they committed, or tried to commit, acts of terrorism after the establishment of the state (one Likud MK, Don Shilansky, tried to plant a bomb in the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem in reaction to improving German-Jewish relations; other Revisionist supporters killed Dr. Israel Kastner, a Hungarian Judenrat member and Labor Party official, in 1957).

In 1983, another right-winger, Yona Avrushmi (who has since turned religious), threw a grenade into a Peace Now demonstration in Jerusalem protesting the Lebanon war. One demonstrator, Emile Greenzweig, was killed, and 10 were wounded; Avrushmi received a life sentence. (It's worth noting that Avrushmi, like Amir, is a Sephardi Jew; both of their crimes highlight an important, but little-discussed, tension between Israel's Sephardim, who are disproportionately represented in the Israeli working class and frequently complain of ethnic discrimination, and the Ashkenazi elite who make up much of the leadership of the Labor Party and the peace movement.)

Ironically, Israel's subculture of political violence has burgeoned at a time when it was much on the mind of “Kaf,” the now much-criticized head of the Shin Bet, Israel's security service. In 1990, Kaf submitted an M.A. dissertation to Haifa University on the roots of right-wing terrorism that briefly discussed the possibility of a lone fanatic assassinating a leader and thereby sparking a civil war. In Israel, however, the specter of civil war lingers deep in the polity; it settled in long before Rabin's death and will continue to haunt the country through the final stages of the peace negotiations. ◀

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I N P R I N T

The senior circuit

By Robert Westbrook

Studs Terkel has been talking with those unwilling to go quietly. "This is no time to relax," says veteran environmentalist David Brower, now 79. "They say you've reached the retirement age, but if you're this old, damn well, there's no real reason to retire and to be put on the shelf and forget what you've spent all this time learning." Brower is one of 70 Americans over the age of 70 who tell their stories to Terkel (himself now 83) in *Coming of Age*, the latest in his extraordinary series of oral histories. Nearly all of Terkel's respondents share Brower's view of retirement, if, sometimes it seems, little else.

Unlike the best of Terkel's books—*Hard Times* (1970), *Working* (1974) and *"The Good War"* (1984)—*Coming of Age* lacks a clear historical or topical focus. The result is a set of disparate memories and reflections that fail to hang together very well. Terkel admits that all of his subjects share only a lengthy life span and an obstinate determination to hang onto it, which is hardly grounds for much of a collective sensibility. He assembles his interviews into four parts of no discernible cohesion and divides these parts into chapters along more or less occupational lines, a category that seems merely convenient.

There is, to be sure, a great deal of common ground among some of those whose voices are heard here, for they are battle-scarred soldiers of the struggle to build the modest American welfare state currently under demolition. They include in their number labor organizers, environmentalists, reform politicians, radical priests and ministers, pioneering proponents of gay and lesbian rights, and veterans of decades of struggle against racism. These respondents subscribe to the "credo and recipe for longevity" of 92-year-old Robert St. John: "Continue to harass all establishments." And like Kentucky gadfly Joe Begley, they are determined that "the last flicker of my life will be against something that I don't think has to be." Yet to this dominant chorus, Terkel adds the strains of corporate lawyers, investment bankers, public relations pitchmen and homicide detectives. He even includes a relentlessly upbeat Iowa businessman, Russell Knapp, who thinks "we live in the most wonderful time in history," and a wealthy nonagenarian of no identifiable occupation, Margot Jacoby, who allows as how she "never in my life mixed with another class of people ... with

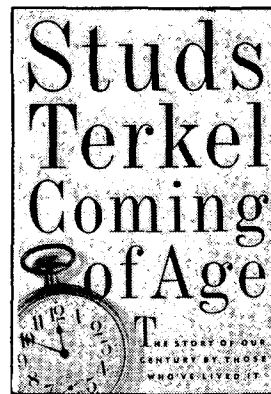
people I considered inferior." Perhaps these two interviews are here to remind us that we need not necessarily respect the views of our elders.

One is never sure what sort of questions Terkel asks of his conversation partners, for he rarely reveals them. But in this case, the perfunctory questions one can glimpse between the lines—such as "What is your average day like these days?" or "Are you religious?"—elicit few memorable responses. As Terkel says, his subjects "are, in a sense, living repositories of our past," yet the historical memories offered here are fragmentary and fleeting. Terkel is right to worry that Americans are suffering from "a national Alzheimer's disease," and to lament, in particular, the truncated historical sense of the young. But if you are searching for a gift for youthful amnesiacs, you would best put a copy of *"The Good War"* in their hands. It remains Terkel's masterpiece.

Nonetheless, *Coming of Age* is not without considerable rewards. Many of these old folks are sharp observers of the changes that have transformed American society in their lifetime, and few are as sanguine as Russell Knapp is about what they see. For example, no teacher can fail to register the aptness of the observations of Timuel Black, who says of his students: "When I look at their basic skills, reading, writing, and even in conversation, they are much more limited than they were when I first started teaching [in 1952]. ... They talk in short, curt sentences. They write, even if legibly, in phrases that are short, vague, and often not to the point."

Even the Republicans Terkel talks with lament the collapse of workplace solidarity, institutional loyalties and civil society. Charles A. Bane, a one-time partner in a prestigious Chicago law firm who lost his pension in an unfortunate merger, comments perceptively on the cruel effects of corporate downsizing: "When my son started in the banking business in Palm Beach, he was put on a six-month consulting basis. Somewhere along the line it was suggested that he be put on as a one-month consultant. That's not very far removed from being hired day to day as a laborer. 'Consultant' is just a title for someone doing an employee's work without the benefits."

Many of Terkel's subjects are bewildered by technological change, and they can be forceful in expressing their concerns about an increasingly "virtual" reality. Painter Jacob Lawrence lovingly fingers a collection of hand tools and reflects on the loss of tactility in computer art. "Some students feel good about not coming into contact with a canvas or paper," he says. "It's done by machine. ...



Coming of Age: The Story of Our Century by Those Who've Lived It

By Studs Terkel
The New Press
468 pp., \$25

Hammer? Chisel? Feel of the hairs of a brush? They don't want to be accused by their peers of succumbing to this human thing: touch." In similar fashion, Dr. Quentin Young offers a brilliant tour of the postwar transformation of American medicine, and laments the manner in which doctors have grown literally out of touch with their patients. As he puts it, "When you look at the lab sheet, you avoid the laying on of hands. If you approach a doctor-in-training program today and ask him how Mrs. Smith is doing, he'll instinctively go to the computer and punch up the latest lab stuff. 'Did she have a good night's sleep? Is that pain in her chest different?' 'Oh, I didn't check that.' Distant? You bet."

The crisis of the American labor movement looms large in this book, reflecting Terkel's own center of gravity (even though he twice misidentifies the IWW as the "International Workers of the World"). He himself rages about an encounter with a yuppie couple at a Chicago bus stop who greet his appreciative anticipation of Labor Day with the curt assurance that they "*loathe* unions." Terkel's response—a vigorous lecture on their unwitting debt to those union men and women who fought for the eight-hour day—elicits only the stricken flight of the youngsters. Ernest Goodman, a Detroit labor lawyer, sums up a century of struggle, accomplishment and defeat as he looks out upon the grim vacancy of Cadillac Square. "The emptiness of Cadillac Square is a metaphor for the changes that have taken place in our economy and society," he observes. "See the old County Building at the end of the square? It was built in 1898. There is a stool in front of it, so the person standing on it could exercise free speech. Trying to exercise that right, you'd get arrested as easily as not. After all the battles were over, the tool remained as a symbol: the stool on which you could stand and speak to the masses below. But there are no masses anymore. There's nobody. In 1930, free speech had a hard time. Now there's plenty of freedom of speech—if you want to address an empty square."

Despite this bleak prospect, few of the left-wing elders here are prepared to throw in the towel. Though very few would trade places with the young, fewer still are inclined to write off their children and grandchildren, and many remain participants with their juniors in a wide range of local activism. Farm labor organizer Jessie de la Cruz speaks for many in the book when she remarks that "You get older and you realize there are many things you can do besides just staying home, besides feeling sorry for yourself. There is always something to do, no matter what age, as long as you can get up and walk and talk. There's always hope."

Even though material such as this is clearly meant to rouse the battle-worn troops of the left, a few of the best interviews in the book have little to do with politics. Occasionally, when asked to reflect on aging and dying, Terkel's subjects offer something other than a quick recital of the latest word from their doctor or time-worn clichés about death, and one catches a glimpse of the much different book Terkel might have composed had he been as interested in such matters as in the legacy of the American left.

The finest of these off-beat interviews is that with Sophia Mumford, the 94-year-old widow of Lewis Mumford, in whose shadow she lived most of her life. Mumford's remarks are a moving reflection on the experience of those who live private lives and who, as a consequence, are able to live on beyond their mortal lives, not in the public record like her husband but in the frailer memories of those among the living with whom they have shared their lives. She opens by saying that she "never thought about being remembered," but it soon becomes apparent that being remembered is precisely what concerns her. Until she was in her 70s, she tells us, "I honestly thought of myself as a second-rate person. I didn't have the oomph. I wasn't the sort of woman men made a pass at. Men never did. Not when I was young and not when I was old. They accepted me, as a friend. I was treated nicely, but I wasn't a sex object ever. And that was a black mark."

Among the men who shared this assessment was Lewis Mumford, if his most recent biographer, Donald Miller, is to be believed, and I suspect Sophia Mumford has used her interview with Terkel to convey something of the extraordinary affection and partnership she and her husband shared, despite his sexual wanderings, which Miller has documented in graphic detail. "When Lewis came into my life," she recalls, "conversation, good conversation, became part of our natural selves. It wasn't just talk, it was an exciting back and forth. ... We read poetry out loud. We read novels." But conversation is evanescent, and as Mumford told her, "No one is ever going to know the amount of intellectual stimulation you gave me." And, with Mumford's death, the one person whose memory could take the sting from this "accolade" was gone. No wonder she then "felt there was no sense of my being here," a sense that has passed only with new friendships with young people eager to share in her own memories and keep them, and her, alive.

Near the end of her interview, Mumford offers a poignant meditation on the death of her son, Geddes, killed on the battlefield in World War II at age 19. Like many of Terkel's subjects, she has outlived one or more of her children, yet she is among the few who have much to say about what this might mean. "When I'm dead," she says, "there will be nobody who knew my son to carry his essence on. Those of us who remember him will be gone. That's the only time in which immortality, or the lack of it, troubles me."

If for most of us it is private memory that provides whatever measure of immortality we hope for, we must nonetheless be aware that memory is a fickle guardian of the past. That is why even the best oral history—and Studs Terkel's is among the best—must be greeted with a measure of skepticism, lest we confuse memory and history. We would do well to remember that those who consent to such interviews are, like Sophia Mumford, not only trying to recover the past but also to craft an epitaph.

Robert Westbrook is a professor of history at the University of Rochester and the author of *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Cornell University Press, 1992).

The god that flailed

By James Weinstein

In the four years since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of many closely guarded archives, a spate of specialized histories, memoirs and documentary collections has appeared. Some, such as *The Unquiet Ghost*, Adam Hochschild's gripping account of Stalin's victims and victimizers (see *ITT*, April 4, 1994), are accessible to the non-specialist, and must reading. Others, such as David Holloway's *Stalin and the Bomb* (see *ITT*, March 6, 1995) and Stephen Kotkin's *Magnetic Mountain, Stalinism as a Civilization*, are comprehensive accounts of their subjects that provide fascinating details and important insights into the contradictory nature of the Soviet experience. Still others, such as Pavel Sudoplatov's *Special Tasks*, offer a useful peek into the bureaucratic mind and culture of Stalin's Soviet Union.

All these books, and even ideological exercises in Cold War self-congratulation—or simplistic Soviet demonization—such as Peter Schweitzer's *Victory*, tell us something useful about the nature of this century's most important historical experience. But none makes sense of the rise and fall of what Soviet leaders liked to call “real existing socialism.” That task has been left to Moshe Lewin, whose most recent work, *Russia/USSR/Russia*, brilliantly elucidates how Stalinism and then the bureaucratic Soviet state developed—and why it ultimately collapsed. I know of no history that can match Lewin's analysis of this unique social experiment in its many heroic and tragic dimensions.

In the most general sense, Lewin sees Soviet history as a richly complex process of forced transition from a near-feudal peasant society to a predominantly industrial urban one. Realizing that awesome ambition took a mere 40 years, but it was achieved at a terrible cost. And by the 1960s, when the goal was reached, the reasons for the Soviet Union's eventual collapse from within had already become apparent.

Lewin's narrative is driven by two underlying ideas, the first theoretical (or ideological), the second historical. In his introductory chapter, he states flatly that from day one “socialism had no chance” in Russia because “the conditions were not ripe for it.” Lenin and the other Russian revolutionary leaders understood this, Lewin explains, because their initial ideology was “German-made.” To them, as to Marx, this meant that capitalism prepared the ground for socialism. It did so by exploding the traditional feudal rela-

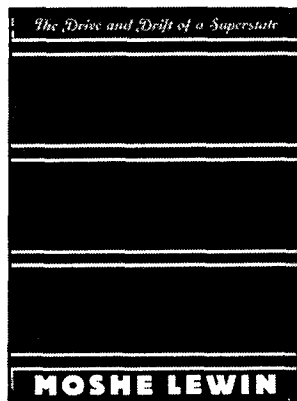
tions that blocked modern development, for without the urban markets, class systems and the struggles for democracy that were characteristic of capitalism, socialism was unimaginable. In this sense, as Lewin notes in the title of one chapter, “Russian socialists firmly believed in capitalism.”

Even so, as early as 1880, Marx and Engels speculated that the weakness of the tsarist state might allow Russian socialists to seize power in order to act as a catalyst for proletarian revolution in the West. And in 1917, Lenin adopted this notion to convince his comrades to act. Lewin concedes that the Bolshevik initiative can be seen as “premature,” and that by leading the Communist coup, Lenin could be accused of causing a “catastrophe.” But Lewin maintains that the logic of this critique ignores the actual historical situation the Communists faced. Coup or no coup, catastrophe was already in the cards in 1917. It had been brought about first by tsarism's collapse, “almost of its own weight,” and then, later that same year, by the Provisional government's fall in much the same manner.

When the Bolsheviks prepared to seize power, Lewin tells us, Lenin still believed that the “most realistic scenario for Russia” was to replicate a “version of the ‘bourgeois democratic revolution’ that had brought or was pushing developed countries into a democratic era.” Unfortunately, however, the Provisional government's inability to establish political democracy made the chances for such a scenario slim indeed. The Bolsheviks, as a result, seized power almost by default.

By 1921, the Bolsheviks had managed to win the civil war in Russia and to hold onto power—though they incurred extraordinary casualties in the process. But the New Communist International had failed to spread the revolution to the West, and the Bolsheviks were left alone to govern a country devoid of the social prerequisites for the society they envisioned.

Indeed, Russia was far more backward, and its situation far more desperate, than Lenin could have foreseen in 1917. The suffering of the peasants during the civil war, Lewin tells us, entailed a social retreat throughout the vast reaches of rural Russia. And even though the peasantry survived the war in better shape than did the more modern sectors of the country, the war pushed the countryside backward “into its age-old shell, characteristic of much more primitive times.” In the process, the peasants “reacquired traits that had been on the wane in the pre-revolutionary period and that ran counter to the developmental path of the times.” The sketchy beginnings of a capi-



Russia/USSR/Russia:
The Drive and Drift of a
Superstate
By Moshe Lewin
The New Press
368 pp., \$30

talist market economy now broke down entirely, and the peasants transformed themselves into “a family-oriented ocean of microfundia—institutions that calculated ‘mouths to feed,’ rather than productivity and market opportunities.”

In other words, when the regime finally got the chance to lead the country toward its declared goals, it faced conditions not seen since the 19th century. And, as Lewin observes, the civil war and the seemingly endless series of crises in its aftermath also transformed the party from a democratic political organization in which policy was vigorously debated into an increasingly bureaucratic arm of the state in which orders from on high were followed without question.

Lenin responded to this deepening crisis by reworking and readapting his conceptions and programs. He had wanted the revolution to be radical, but once the Bolsheviks were firmly in power, he “insistently demanded” profound moderations of his party’s program. His main goal, Lewin tells us, was to stimulate economic development. And that, he believed, required capitalist enterprise—albeit under tight state supervision. Thus, in 1921, the New Economic Policy (NEP).

Not surprisingly, many party members opposed this effort to encourage capitalist market relations. Nevertheless, Lenin continued to argue for such a program “to prove to the peasants that the new masters know how to run things to the peasants’ advantage.” At the last party congress he attended, in 1922, he urged his followers to take lessons “from international and local private capitalists.” In substance, Lewin writes, Lenin warned that “either we pass the exam of competition with the private sectors, or there will be a [flop].”

The NEP did not exactly flop, but it was short-lived. The most relaxed and democratic period of the Soviet experience—at least until glasnost and perestroika—it survived Lenin, who died in 1924, by only four years. The problem was that even under the NEP the Soviet Union was being left in the dust, becoming even more “backward” as it crept slowly forward. Then, too, war threatened from both West and East, increasing the pressure on party leaders to accelerate modernization. Within the party, a sense of crisis grew and a powerful battle raged among the elite on this issue. And as the battle raged, the party became, in Lewin’s words, “ever more bureaucratized, centralized, and depoliticized.”

With Stalin’s ascent to power in 1928, the NEP was abandoned. Then, utilizing the statist traditions of Russia’s tsarist past to consolidate his rule, Stalin ruthlessly forced the growth of heavy industry and the collectivization of agriculture on a largely inert population. In the 12 years that followed—from 1928 until Germany invaded in 1941—

forced industrialization created some 8,000 huge and “presumably modern” (in Lewin’s words) enterprises. But the process entailed a massive disruption of Soviet society, during which socialist ideology was increasingly used as camouflage for nationalist and statist credos.

It was during these years—when Stalin proclaimed the goal of “socialism in one country”—that the Soviet leadership fully abandoned socialism, and that Stalinist terror took root. Lewin closely examines the workings of Stalinism, explaining not only how it functioned but also the way it helped Stalin move the bureaucracy, and why it was accepted and even supported by many on all levels of society.

The idea that the Soviet Union was not socialist is hardly news to most Western socialists. Yet politicians, the media and even scholars have eagerly accepted the Soviet Union’s



self-definition. Even a good historian like Stephen Kotkin, in his admirable *Magnetic Mountain*, ridicules Lewin’s claim that Stalin abandoned socialist principles. “Such a perspective,” Kotkin writes, “ignores the fact that at no time did the Soviet regime declare or seek to effect a counterrevolution—a turn of affairs that would not, in any case, be tolerated by the Soviet population.”

But, of course, neither Stalin nor his successors made such a declaration. As both Lewin and Kotkin amply demonstrate, the declared principles of socialism were essential to the regime’s popular support. As Lewin argues, the

leaders boasted of socializing industry, but they nationalized everything in an all-powerful state. And they talked about the working class as the owners of all property, but they allowed workers fewer rights than those enjoyed by their counterparts in capitalist society. Indeed, the workers who built Soviet industry, while glorified in song and film, were treated as what Lewin calls *rabsila*, servile forces.

Kotkin himself testifies to this. And he tells us that while party leaders at the Magnitogorsk steel complex talked incessantly about socialism, they could never define it in any way except as "not capitalism." Moreover, when it came to planning the new steel works, party leaders copied the only model they had, corporate capitalist industrialization. Thus, to plan Magnitogorsk, they hired the company that had designed the United States Steel works at Gary, Ind. And the focus of their "new socialist city," as at Gary, was the steel works.

The appeal to socialist ideals became especially important to Stalin as he whipped the country into a frenzy of industrialization. But industrialization had never been socialism's goal before the Russian Revolution. Marx, and pre-Stalin Marxists, saw that as capitalism's great historical contribution. And they saw socialism as a democratic, non-statist form of what is now called postindustrial society.

Stalin, of course, turned all this on its head. His socialism adopted the bureaucratic statist traditions of Russia's most brutal tsars. And his vision was narrowly nationalistic. This has led some to equate Stalin with Hitler. But, as Lewin points out in a chapter devoted to the two dictators, Stalin's national socialism had little in common with Hitler's National Socialism. Hitler's fascism was built on a firm capitalist base. Stalin's "socialism" was his adaptation of an anti-capitalist revolution to an idiosyncratic, backward society in fundamental flux.

Accordingly, while Hitler had an aggressive, explicitly expansionist program, Stalin's ideology was essentially defensive. Unlike Hitler, who was the founder of his movement, Stalin was one among many contestants for leadership. Partly for this reason, Stalin was constantly on guard against his followers and apparatchiks. He directed his aggression inwardly, against his own people, where he saw nothing but enemies, the more so after he had successfully eliminated all of his real rivals. To Lewin's mind, Stalin's "concoction of 'enemies'" was "the real heart of Stalinism and specific to it."

Cold War ideologues, of course, painted Stalin and the Soviet Union as insidiously aggressive. But, as Lewin's portrait implies (he doesn't discuss this), Stalin saw foreign Communist parties only as defenders of the Soviet state. He consistently reined in foreign Communists who threatened to become rivals, or to cause trouble by attempting to take power in their own countries. In China, for example, Mao was ordered to subordinate himself and his party to Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang in 1926. Obeying that directive

almost led to the Chinese party's annihilation by Chiang. Only by breaking with Stalin and striking out on the Long March was Mao able to take advantage of World War II and gain power—and to become the rival Stalin feared.

The rush to industrialize also spawned a sprawling bureaucratic Soviet state, a process that Lewin traces in two stages: the Stalinist state, and the post-Stalin bureaucracy. Initially, he observes, Bolsheviks did not think much about the state apparatus. Only when ex-tsarist officials manning government offices went on strike in 1918 did they begin to see a problem. However, bureaucracy per se did not concern them. Rather, they were alarmed that these experts from the previous regime were nonproletarians who lacked socialist ideology. Yet as Soviet-educated apparatchiks began to fill the ranks of the ever-growing bureaucracies, and as the number and complexity of government-run bureaus, agencies and commissions proliferated, inefficiency and rigidity grew apace.

Under Stalinist industrialization and rural collectivization, bureaucracy burgeoned because the Soviet economy was governed by "the plan," rather than by the depoliticized consumers. "Massive overproduction of bureaucracies," Lewin writes, was a spontaneous side effect of the state's "sudden imposition of large-scale industrialization on a pre-bourgeois peasant society." At first, as a parallel structure, the party exercised some control over the always-suspect apparatchiks. But gradually the Bolsheviks themselves were "sucked into the bureaucratic maze." And as the bureaucracy became denser and denser—and more and more difficult to control—Stalin's ambition put him at greater and greater odds with the monster he helped create. Seeing bureaucratic foot-dragging as the work of class enemies not to be trusted, he tried to keep his apparatchiks on their toes by terrorizing them. As Lewin argues, the Stalin years were unique: A dictator hell-bent on transforming the entire society with a bureaucratic creation of his own making, increasingly unable to get things done.

Stalin could give orders but he frequently could not get them carried out. Even his use of terror, designed, in part, to get results, was unequal to the task. Afraid to offend their superiors by acting on their own, apparatchiks were paralyzed by the constant fear that to become conspicuous might make them candidates to disappear in the middle of the night.

No surprise, then, that when Stalin died in 1953 the bureaucracy breathed a collective sigh of relief. Free, at last, of its only constraint, it now came into its own. As it moved from terror to peace, from turmoil to order, from constant change to routine, the bureaucracy, now fully merged with the party, achieved full control of the country. Now all that was left for it was to move from corruption to stagnation—and then to collapse.

***Stalin's ambition
put him at greater
and greater odds
with the monster
he helped create.***

Stalin's death, which occurred at about the midpoint of the Soviet experience, ushered in the Soviet Union's longest and most stable period. Yet, presumably because they were years in which a stultifying bureaucracy inexorably followed a predetermined course, Lewin devotes relatively scant attention to the years from 1953 to 1990. For example, he mentions Nikita Khrushchev—whose speech at the Soviet party's 20th Congress in 1956 was the first official acknowledgment of Stalin's crimes—only twice in the body of the book (and once in an appendix). Lewin credits Khrushchev with attempting to reinvigorate the system with a new dynamism in society and the polity. There had been some 580,000 gulag inmates, sentenced for “counterrevolutionary acts,” in 1951. Khrushchev cut this number to 11,000 shortly after he assumed office. As these figures imply, “terror actually subsided and changed forms appreciably after Khrushchev came to power”—though the overall system of controls continued largely unchanged.

But Khrushchev did not stay in power long. “The ruling bureaucratic power grid, on its way to its own pinnacle, stalled reforms,” replacing “the cult of Stalin” with “the cult of the state.” After Khrushchev was deposed, some observers abroad and analysts inside saw that “the regime was heading toward a full-fledged and generalized crisis.” Indeed, under Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin, open and internal debates on reforms continued. And “the intellectual and professional level of the participants,” as well as “the level of their hope and commitment were [sic] impressive and promising.” But this movement of “the men of the sixties” was also doomed. Squelched in the crackdown that accompanied the Soviet crushing of the 1968 “Prague Spring” uprising, it was to be the last serious reform attempt until glasnost and perestroika opened the floodgates in the late '80s.

In the post-Stalin years, the Cold War was the bureaucracy's key ideological weapon. Lewin argues that the opponents of serious reform thrived on the Cold War. “A less conflictual environment,” he writes, “would have diminished the importance of the military-industrial complex” and deprived the conservatives of their appeal to a patriotic defense against an enemy hell-bent on their destruction.

If the Eisenhower-Khrushchev détente had not become a casualty of the downing of the American U-2 spy plane in 1961, Lewin suggests, the nuclear arms race might have been stopped at an early stage. If that had happened, and “an international environment of increased economic and cultural exchanges with the West” had been established in the early '60s, “the structural inadequacies of the Soviet economic system would have been exposed much earlier and the cover-up that ‘patriotism’ offered to the regime's conservatives would have lost its appeal.” The result then might well have been the avoidance of 25 years of Cold War and a smoother breakup of the Soviet state.

This argument, of course, undermines the self-congratulation of defenders of the Reagan-era arms buildups. They believe that the arms race bankrupted the Soviet Union and forced its demise. But, as Lewin argues, the Soviet Union

was already bankrupt, politically as well as economically. In its last decades it was kept standing only with the crutch provided by American Cold Warriors. In other words, the Soviet Union died from natural causes: “No one toppled it; it fell from its own excessive weight.”

And what now, now that Russia is Russia again? This is the question for which no one, Lewin included, has the answer. But Lewin is certain of one thing: Just as nothing happened suddenly in the Soviet Union—not the decomposition of the regime, nor the wave of reforms, nor the dismemberment of the Union—neither will the current situation find a quick or easy solution. As Lewin writes, the crisis took decades to develop. It was already acute when Leonid Brezhnev, “already dead for all practical purposes,” traveled to Germany to represent the USSR. And the fact that he was replaced by two mortally ill general secretaries before Mikhail Gorbachev came into office added “another touch to the morbidity of the situation.” In short, the complexity of the current situation is an effect of “inherited long-term decay,” exacerbated by the efforts of those now in power to get rid of the old structure and replace it with something else. The problem is that there is little basis for something else, because by “denying political involvement to society, the system denied itself the capacity to enter the modern world.” And by creating an economy that was completely owned and operated by the state, “the collapse of the state system damaged, rather than liberated, the economy.”

The Soviet experience, Lewin asserts, proves one thing: “History does not go away; it stays with us in many ways—and it had better be mastered.” Decrying the tendency of many Russians to reject the Soviet experience in toto, Lewin warns that “making sweeping rejections without good knowledge is a prescription for destroying what works and replacing it with what does not.” This is what happened after October 1917, but it need not happen again. In the end, Lewin's optimism rests on all the forces that were developed but stifled under the fallen regime—on the much better-educated population and pools of talent that are not yet fully deployed.

The process of “relearning how to become a nation, a state, and a system” may take years or decades. In this process, the country's “political complexion may still change several more times.” But much is happening in local governments, in and around schools, in business initiatives, study groups, neighborhood associations and a multitude of professional associations. Tens of thousands of these exist and may help create a new leadership and a more democratic future. They are a countervailing force to “so much that is antiquated and backward-looking” on the political scene today. As in the United States—where political institutions have been corrupted for dramatically different reasons—proposals for democracy in the new Russia depend largely on newly politicized citizens reclaiming the country's embattled civic culture, for themselves and for the future of humanity. ◀

Strip mine

By Joseph Levine

In one sense, whether or not Palestinians have gained economic advantage from the Israeli occupation is beside the point: It is simply wrong, as a matter of principle, for one people to deny self-determination to another and occupy their land. But the diplomatic dance of Middle East statecraft—to say nothing of the question of Palestinian well-being—demands that we take full account of the economic effects of the Israeli occupation. Many Israelis argue that theirs has been, unique in history, a “benign occupation,” which has introduced important economic improvements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. One should always suspect those in power who claim unprecedented benevolence, but it’s also nice to have the facts to back up the suspicion. Thanks to Sara Roy’s new book, we have the facts and more: a new theoretical lens through which to view them.

In a careful, scholarly and thorough analysis of the economic impact of the occupation on the Gaza Strip, Roy builds her case that Gaza has suffered not just underdevelopment, a fate common to the Third World as a result of exploitation by the First World, but “de-development.” Roy, now a visiting scholar at Harvard, collected data over the course of eight years, covering the period preceding the intifada through the granting of limited self-rule to the Palestinians. Roy has spent a lot of time in Gaza, intensively researching conditions there. Her study—while not exactly a spellbinding read—is a major contribution to our understanding of the Gaza Strip, the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and also to the general question of the relation between the industrial powers and the remainder of humanity.

According to Roy, “de-development” is qualitatively different from underdevelopment. Where the latter allows, though in a distorted form, structural transformation, capital accumulation and coordinated institutional development, de-development completely obstructs these processes. The de-development strategy produces an economic structure totally lacking in the requisites for genuine, independent development. This aim stems, in turn, from Israel’s will to assert and extend national sovereignty. “Prior to 1967, underdevelopment was a characteristic feature of Gaza’s economy,” Roy writes. “De-development commenced only

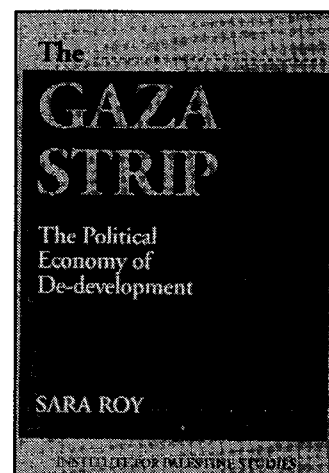
under Israeli occupation.”

The bulk of the book is devoted to explaining how the specific workings of Israeli occupation policies (unintentionally abetted by the Palestinians themselves and the surrounding Arab states) fostered de-development. But Roy also offers a welcome focus on the nationalist nature of Israel’s rule in the Occupied Territories. De-development policies, in her view, logically result from the irredentist character of the Israeli state: “The imperatives of expanding Israeli sovereignty produced an economic policy that prioritized [economic] integration over separation, and dis-possession over exploitation.”

This policy has wrought considerable structural damage to the Gazan economy. Israel has confiscated Palestinian productive resources—primarily land and water—while channeling Gaza’s other economic activities into serving the highly industrialized Israeli economy. Meanwhile, the Israeli administrators of the occupation have strictly prohibited development of an institutional base, whether professional, financial or political, which could guide independent economic development.

Roy persuasively dispels the data adduced by the occupation’s defenders to demonstrate the ostensible rise in Gaza’s standard of living since 1967. It’s true that personal income and levels of consumption climbed significantly in the early years of the occupation, as did the provision of services. Employment in Israel also contributed greatly to increased prosperity. But the price for this improvement was steep. As Roy demonstrates, Israel appeased the Palestinian workforce with rising personal income and services while systematically dismantling and weakening the indigenous economic base. The effects of this policy are clear today: Cut off both from employment in Israel and significant subsidies from abroad, Gaza’s population has become deeply impoverished since the onset of the intifada, with virtually no local resources to take up the slack.

Gaza’s principal economic resource, both prior to 1967 and after, is agriculture, especially citrus production. For agricultural production to grow in proportion with the needs of an expanding population, there must be sufficient land and water. But Israel has severely limited Palestinian access to water in Gaza, both for personal and agricultural use. In 1986, annual per capita water consumption



**The Gaza Strip:
The Political Economy
of De-development**
By Sara Roy
Institute for Palestine Studies
372 pp., \$27.95

for Arab Gazans was 142 cubic meters, while for Jewish settlers it was 2,240 cubic meters. A similar proportion held for agricultural use. What's more, the water that was available to Palestinians suffered from exceptionally high salinity and nitrate concentration, damaging to both personal health and citrus production.

As for land, by 1990 58 percent of Gaza's territory was under Israeli control. Extension of agriculture and provision of adequate housing have been impossible with the loss of so much land. In fact, land and water confiscation has devastated the local economy to such an extent that it's now a leading cause of Palestinian emigration. This, in turn, drains the region of badly needed human capital and fuels the remaining population's dependence on Israel for employment.

Such conditions plainly render the terms of Palestinian self-rule in the 1993 Oslo accords a far cry from true independence and sovereignty. Most local production is—and will likely remain—oriented toward Israel's needs; industry tends to be made up of small, labor-intensive firms doing sub-contracting work for Israeli business. Restrictions on farming ensure that Gaza will not compete with Israeli agriculture, while keeping agricultural production, like all other enterprise, directed away from domestic needs. Failure to invest adequately in infrastructure or industry has retarded Gaza's potential for internally directed growth. The local economy's addiction to external transfers made the interruptions of labor flowing into Israel during the intifada—together with the cutoff of income transfers from the Arab states after the Gulf War—economically devastating.

Other forces in the political culture of the Occupied Territories—which Roy groups together under the term “de-institutionalization”—have further tightened Israel's grip on the region. De-institutionalization, in Roy's account, thwarts any civic or economic group that “could plan for and support productive investment over time.” And indeed, a survey of Israel's dealings with Gazan municipal councils, chambers of commerce, professional associations, educational institutions and finance and credit institutions reveals a systematic policy of restriction and harassment. The effects of three decades of de-institutionalization are apparent now in the inability of the Palestinian Authority to chart an independent course for Gaza's development.

Will any of these conditions change once the Oslo plan is finalized? Roy sees no prospect here for basic change. As she puts it: “Israeli policy in the Gaza Strip continues to be defined by what it does not allow rather than by what it does. What it does not allow is real Palestinian control over key economic resources.” Though the notion of de-development may have theoretical shortcomings, this conclusion stands as a powerful indictment of the kind of agreement likely to emerge from a peace process now thrown into more turmoil than ever.

Joseph Levine is an associate professor of philosophy at North Carolina State University and is a member of the Raleigh Coalition for Peace in the Middle East.

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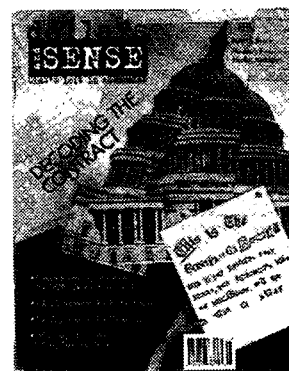
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SPEED READING

Subversion As Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia

By Audrey R. Kahin and George McT. Kahin

The New Press

318 pp., \$25

Three years before a CIA-sponsored exile brigade was crushed at the Bay of Pigs, a larger and more complicated CIA operation was quietly launched in Indonesia. Hidden for decades from Congress and the American public, the operation has been expertly reconstructed by Audrey and George Kahin, who note that to this day it remains one of the “most zealously guarded secrets in the history of U.S. covert overseas operations.”

In 1957 the Eisenhower administration, haunted by the “loss” of China, feared that Indonesia would be the next domino to fall. The country’s proud, charismatic president, Sukarno, enraged the U.S. State Department by maintaining Indonesia’s neutrality in the Cold War, opposing residual Dutch colonialism and refusing to ban the large, anti-Soviet Indonesian Communist Party, which sought a parliamentary road to power.

All this prompted the United States to formulate a policy aimed at toppling the government and replacing it with one more favorable to the West. Said one CIA agent, “I think it’s time we held Sukarno’s feet to the fire.”

By relying on newly declassified documents and countless interviews with many of the key American and Indonesian participants, the Kahins have produced a powerful indictment of Cold War ideology and the people who sustained it. The attitude of Eisenhower’s secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, who tersely advocated the dissolution of a sprawling archipelago comprising more than 13,000 islands, was typical: “As between a territorially united Indonesia which is leaning and progressing toward Communism and a breakup of that country into racial and geographical units, I would prefer the latter...”

The grievances of disgruntled military officers on the

islands of Sumatra and Sulawesi—who resisted government attempts to streamline the army—and the impressive performance of the Communist Party in the elections of 1957 gave the Eisenhower administration a pretext to intervene. The Kahins show how the CIA financed and armed several thousand dissident soldiers with bazookas and recoilless rifles while U.S. submarines transported rebel leaders to covert training sessions at American military bases at Okinawa and Saipan.

In early 1958, war erupted between the Indonesian army and the dissidents. But government forces routed the strongest rebel divisions. Stunned by the defeat, which stood in stark contrast to the success of the CIA-backed coup in Guatemala in 1954, the Eisenhower administration belatedly concluded that its staunchest ally against communism in the archipelago was the Indonesian army itself and began to provide the government with token amounts of military and economic assistance.

However, determined to prevent the total collapse of a movement it had done so much to create, the United States simultaneously supplied B-26 jets—as well as American and Taiwanese pilots—to small groups of rebels holding out in northeastern Indonesia. Government forces eventually defeated the dissidents, but not before thousands died in the fighting. In one incident in May 1958, several hundred civilians perished when an American military pilot bombed

a church and marketplace before government forces downed his plane.

The authors argue persuasively that the civil war of 1957-58 permanently altered the Indonesian political landscape by strengthening the military and destroying the country’s fragile parliamentary system. By 1965, Indonesian society had become increasingly militarized, and the army, in the wake of an abortive coup

attempt, unleashed its fury on the Communist Party’s millions of unarmed supporters in the trade unions and peasant organizations. At least 500,000 people were killed in the carnage; 750,000 others were imprisoned. The CIA proclaims its innocence in the events of 1965, but the agency’s files on the matter remain sealed.

Of the U.S. officials involved in the events of 1957-58, not one was held accountable for his activities, although one former U.S. ambassador, too weak to write his memoirs, cooperated with the authors in an attempt to “set the record straight.” For the 200 million people in the archipelago, including the beleaguered East Timorese, the American intervention of 1957-58 is much more than a historical footnote: 1995 marks the 30th anniversary of military rule in Indonesia.

—Scott Sherman



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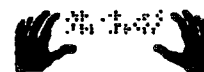
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Continued from page 4

asbestos industry in Milwaukee. Indeed, our work in Milwaukee is the first construction industry organizing drive using Organizing Institute interns. Laborers are building a strong labor and community coalition for fair wages, safe working conditions and asbestos-removal procedures that will safeguard the health and well-being of our communities. We have fashioned an organizing campaign that is expensive and labor intensive. However, we anticipate real benefits for our members, the workers in the industry and the Milwaukee community. Can we get some credit?

Michael R. Ryan
President

Wisconsin Laborers' District Council
Madison, Wis.

Editor's note: The references to the Laborers were lost in the editing process. A full story on the union's Milwaukee campaign is in the works.

All bets off

Please stop wasting print on William Upski Wimsatt and his fatuous self-promotion ("What bet? Which America?," October 30). His muddled essays and wrongheaded "Bet with America" at best cloud the issue of race and poverty, and at worst suggest that he is guilty of the vilest sort of exploitation.

Wimsatt's project relies on the most manipulative of literary devices—the threat of violence—wherein he puts his white ass on the line to prove ... what? That there are humans in the ghetto? That the violence there isn't as bad as reported? This is neither news nor insight, and it smacks of an even more appalling literary device: the brave white explorer revealing that the primitives are in fact noble savages.

And now Wimsatt admits that he has been cheating on his bet. He admits that his trip was actually a promotional tour for his book. Please don't continue to let him use your magazine to pimp his book. Surely you could give the space to

someone who actually has something of value to say.

Aaron Shure
Burbank, Calif.

Vanilla Upski

I was blown away by the impeccable logic of William Upski Wimsatt's October 30 article. Wimsatt insists that it's safe to walk around so-called bad neighborhoods because one white person visited a couple of American ghettos for a few hours at a time. This is a great logician at work. Now I finally realize that Vietnam was safe in the late '60s. My father was there for a year, witnessed the Tet offensive firsthand, and came away unscathed. I also know of people who have engaged in unsafe sex and shared needles. They don't have the HIV virus, therefore these practices must be perfectly safe.

Now that these questions have been cleared up, I'm glad that this second-rate Vanilla Ice has the honesty to admit that he felt "silly" during his trip. Sooner or later Mr. Wimsatt is going to get a sound thrashing—probably by letting his guard down during one of his voyeuristic forays into the inner city—get married, have kids and move out to Schaumburg or some similar suburb. If he loses some of his delusions of grandeur, he can go into advertising. He has a vivid enough imagination for it.

Brian Mier
Chicago

Kaiser rules

"Medicine in the Marketplace" ("In Short," October 30) inaccurately portrays Kaiser Permanente. Your readers should realize that Kaiser is a nonprofit organization. It consists of three entities: two nonprofit organizations, the hospitals and insurance segments, and Kaiser Permanente, a for-profit medical group. The "disturbing aspects of the Kaiser plan" to link physicians' bonus pay and leadership compensation should be understood for what it is, a for-profit corporation seeking to control costs and maximize its profits.

Having said that, I'd like to point out that, as a Kaiser member, I've been more than satisfied with the services I have received. As a person with a disability, I receive a very expensive drug (valued at \$900 per month) for a small fee. Never have they tried to eliminate this treatment regime. If I were in an indemnity plan using fee-for-service physicians I probably would not be able to afford the treatment, and I do not doubt that my attending physician would shrug his or her shoulders and say something about how it's a shame.

In closing, let me say that I enjoyed the above issue even as I disagreed with the old, worn 19th-century European paradigm of labor and capital that seems to animate your newsmagazine. Your reporting on the state of labor, on the Million Man March and on the potential for corruption of government scientific agencies through corporate influence was timely, thought-provoking and, sadly, little discussed in meaningful ways in other publications.

Mark A. Conly
Oakland, Calif.

Jim McNeill replies: I thank Mark A. Conly for clarifying Kaiser's corporate structure. I'm also glad to hear that Conly is a satisfied Kaiser subscriber. Unfortunately, not every Kaiser customer is so happy. Another correspondent has written to ITT, conveying reports from members of the Kaiser Permanente Northwest HMO who believe it has begun "reducing health care services for ... subscribers." Readers seeking more comprehensive information about Kaiser can contact the watchdog group Consumers for Quality Care at 10951 W. Pico Blvd., Third Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90064.

Correction

In the October 30 editorial, we misidentified Ralph Estes' new book. The correct title of the book is *Tyranny of the Bottom Line: Why Corporations Make Good People Do Bad Things*. It is scheduled for publication in January by Berrett-Koehler (415) 288-0260.

Winning ugly

By Woody Igou

Desperate times require desperate measures. Now that Colin Powell has left the field, the sagging poll numbers for the GOP's remaining stable of primary nags recently prompted Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour to seek a radical new campaign strategy. After consulting with pollsters, plastic surgeons and fashion designers, Barbour has obtained the composite characteristics of the perfect, electable Republican candidate. Of course, the medical procedures will be painful and complicated. Although the stitches may not heal in time for the primaries, body-donor candidate Charlton Heston is eager to get on with it. All that remains is for the other candidates to swallow their egos and give 'til it hurts.

Brain: Arlen Specter

Capable of creative solutions to intractable political problems. (See single-bullet theory.) Handles pesky women in a snap.

Hair: Newt Gingrich

Metallic silver head of hair promotes futuristic look; can be tinted with blue rinse when courting seniors.

Forehead furrows: Pat Buchanan

Radiate populist concern on command; great place to tuck business cards of potential donors (non-Japanese only).

Eyebrows: Bob Dornan

Afford protection from hurled eggs, rotten tomatoes; give veneer of respectability even to most demented statements.

Eyes: Bob Dole

Poll-driven, heat-sensitive; depending on programming, they rotate independently to right, center or both simultaneously.

Ears: Phil Gramm

Elephantine in the power-hungry mold of LBJ; can hear the soft pad of Gucci loafers on marble at 100 yards.

Nose: Colin Powell

Fox-like, ultra-sensitive membranes programmed to flee the unwinnable. (Although Powell decided not to enter the primaries, his admission to the Republican Party was reportedly contingent upon his providing "unconditional" support for the GOP nominee.)

Mouth: Bob Dole

Capable of growls and darkest sarcasm from either side of orifice.

Bow tie: Steve Forbes

Allows flannel-shirted "man of the middle class" to gain entry to country clubs to kow-tow to industrialists.

Flannel shirt: Lamar Alexander

Paradoxical combination of puny lumberjack and Washington insider momentarily stuns voters, allowing candidate to move in for the handshake.

Stars and Bars: Colin Powell

A great clip-on accessory when touring military bases, or south of Mason-Dixon line.

